

TOWARD A
RECONSTRUCTION
OF RELIGION

A Philosophical Probe

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OF RELIGION

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JACQUELINE

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PREFACE

By Way of an Unfinished Parable

A people that had lived for thousands of years on an island had developed a secure and ordered society and a comprehensive vision of their place both on the island and in the world at large. The only disturbing feature was that they could see at a distance what appeared to be other islands. These islands were separated from them by treacherous waters. For centuries, the majority on the secure island argued that all attention and energy should be directed toward the interior development of their own community's life. They warned that even looking for long periods at those other islands could be dangerous. Occasionally someone who could no longer adhere to the tight code of their island would leap into the sea; others apparently reached one of the islands but were never heard from again.

Eventually, however, swimmers from the other islands landed on the central island. Most of these people would describe the sad state of affairs on the island which they had left and tell the central islanders how fortunate they were to have the safety and security of their society. Often the outsiders would ask permission to join the central island's society; some of them eventually made great contributions to its life.

Over the generations, the central islanders built up a large store of objects that had been brought by the newcomers or had floated ashore. Some of the more enterprising islanders came to value these objects and concluded that, though the

central island society had everything absolutely necessary to a full life, worth-while things were nevertheless being produced on the other islands. From time to time, some adventurous youth would ask the leaders for permission to swim to one of the islands in order to return with knowledge and objects that might enrich the life of the central island. At first, the leader refused permission; later, a compromise was developed. Certain specially trained individuals would be permitted to venture forth but only on the condition that they be fastened to a lengthy and strong life line. If they encountered any danger they had only to pull on the line and they would be hauled back to the safety of the central island. This plan worked well. Over the years, guarded two-way communication between the central island and the others developed. Both groups benefited.

The life liners gradually assumed a special position. On the one hand they received a good deal of abuse both from some of their fellow islanders, who thought they were introducing destructive changes, and from some of the other islanders, who thought them cowardly for not leaving their home island permanently. On the other hand, they were also doubly celebrated: first, by some of their fellow islanders who admired their courage in venturing into strange lands while retaining their fidelity to the principles of their home society; second, by some of the other islanders who admired the life liners' willingness to meet with them, listen to them, work with them and disagree with them.

In the course of time some of the life liners became dissatisfied with their role. They felt that the life line limited them in a number of ways. While they were able to meet with the other islanders, the life lines prohibited them from having any meeting very far inland. Nor were they able to participate in such activities as descending into caves or climbing mountains. Yet they had learned that these activities, though often dangerous, frequently led to beneficial discoveries; in fact, many fruits

of these discoveries had been communicated to the central island society.

These dissatisfied life liners had no desire to separate themselves from the life of the central island but they did desire to participate more fully in the life of the other islands, arguing that they might thereby be enabled to contribute more both to life on their own island and to the life of the other islands. They came to realize, however, that only by venturing out to the other islands without a life line would they be able to achieve this. They had to admit, of course, that there was no guarantee that they could achieve their goal. They also knew that they would run great risks and that in all likelihood some of them would be permanently separated from their home island. In "fear and trembling," then, they went forth on the treacherous sea, aware that they would never again have that security and certainty which had so formed their earlier existence. They had only the hope that they would not lose life itself.

Since the times and conditions of the departures of the adventurers were various, they did not all reach the same destination. Thus they found themselves members of different communities. Each adventurer in his own way proceeded to involve himself in the life of his new community. At first, most of them thought frequently, often nostalgically, of their earlier life and continued to practice many of its customs. Gradually, however, some became so immersed in their new life that they could hardly remember the old one—or, when they did, they recalled it with bitterness and resentment and considered themselves fortunate to be out of it. But others, equally involved, insisted that the negative features of home-island life were not the total picture. Paradoxically, they claimed that they had come to appreciate much better the profound and liberating possibilities of their native island as a result of involvement in another community. They were led to conclude that if many features of their old life were combined with those of the new,

there would be no limit to the human possibilities that would result.

For a long time methods of communication remained crude and primitive. But finally they were sufficiently developed to allow contact with both those on the home island and those on the other islands. When communication was first established, it was accompanied by a great burst of optimism. The adventurers were like children dashing to their parents eager to display newly discovered treasures. Contributing to the optimism was the change that had taken place among the home islanders. Many no longer claimed to be self-sufficient, but expressed a desire to assimilate whatever was worth-while in the life of the other communities.

Repeated exchanges, however, dampened the spirits of all concerned. A certain pattern of responses seemed to be emerging. The adventurer would explain his newly found tool or way of accomplishing some task to the members of his home community—of which, it must be added, the adventurer strongly insisted he was still a member. The responses tended to take several recurrent forms. One was the response of gratitude for a good that seemed immediately to enrich the life of the home-island community. Another was to say that what was being offered was already present and in a purer form in the home community, though admittedly it had been often hidden due to poor management. Finally, there was outright rejection on the grounds that acceptance would undermine the essential and immutable features of home-island life. The end result seemed to be that the home-island community, though willing to make superficial changes, would not entertain any suggestion that might conceivably change what had been designated essential to their life. In some respects, the adventurers felt, relations with their native community were more discouraging than before. As long as the home islanders resisted all change and all goods from outside themselves, there was a clearly delineated line of difference which allowed for a sharp focusing of issues

and a definite determination of where each one stood. But since the home islanders had assimilated so much from others, and now mistakenly considered themselves open and receptive to anything that was worth-while, regardless of its origin, the issues had become blurred. Attempts at communication were too often at cross-purposes.

A further discouraging aspect of the situation was that the adventurers who had landed on different islands were themselves in dispute. They generally communicated with each other better than with the home islanders. Yet there were strikingly similar problems. They slowly came to realize that they were repeating the intolerance which they had supposedly left behind them in their home community. Further, the members of new communities had overlooked the extent to which they had themselves been transformed.

The adventurers vowed to continue their efforts. They now knew, however, that there would be no "one way" or "one pattern" of life by which they would realize their goal. While being faithful to the road they had chosen, they would strive harder to observe and listen to those taking other directions. They hoped to remain open, willing to surrender their approach should experience show it unfruitful. But they now also knew that nothing less than their lives would be adequate witness to the authenticity of their claims. They chose then to be "experiments"—not only for the sake of their native community, but for the community of man.

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INTRODUCTION

That institutional religion is in deep crisis is beyond dispute, though the nature of and the reasons for that crisis may be expressed in diametrically opposite language. Some would hold that the term "crisis" is too mild to do justice to the reality of the situation in which religion finds itself: *collapse*, understood as a functional breakdown or an existential irrelevance, would be a more accurate description. There is no universal agreement on the degree and permanence of this collapse but there is a significant convergence in descriptions of it by psychologists, sociologists, philosophers and theologians of every major religious tradition. I agree with those who see religion as in a state of collapse¹—it is only against such a background that the necessity for the effort which is urged in this work can be understood. Despite my negative evaluation of the present state of religion, I hope that this undertaking will be seen as a positive effort.²

My hypothesis, stated starkly and simply, is that only a radically reconstructed religion can enable religion at once to survive and to serve man. This last is redundant, since there can be no *significant* survival that is not also a human service.

The kind of reconstruction envisioned here is not an esoteric religious project. The reason is this: the collapse of religion is, in my judgment, but a heightened manifestation of a broader cultural collapse. The Western world, understood as a stable world order providing a fundamental value-structure within which men located and identified themselves, has been collapsing for several centuries. A century ago only a prophet such as

Nietzsche perceived this, but we in the second half of the twentieth century have become as aware of this as we are of our daily newspaper. Because of the industrial, technological and communications revolutions, this collapse can now be said to be world-wide. We should not minimize either the seriousness or the loss involved in this collapse, but since I presuppose, as will later be shown, a dynamic and developmental world, this collapse can serve as the occasion and the stimulus for a new human effort of reconstruction. Hopefully, this effort will result in the creation of new values, ideas and institutions which will serve the human community even better than those which have been lost. Actually, then, it is man and his world which stand in need of reconstruction: I am not interested in any reconstruction of religion that is not simultaneously a reconstruction of man and his world.³

Just as there will be a range of evaluations of the bleakness of our present situation, so there will be a variety of curative responses to it. We can assume that every respectable response will endeavor to better the situation by conserving certain values, insights and visions previously achieved and by creating and assimilating new values, insights and visions. Despite diversity in detail, approaches to reconstruction will fall into either of two groups. The first group will comprise those who will operate within a framework of ideas which, in its fundamental principles, has been constructed at an earlier time. The task of those making this approach will be to so modify their framework that they will be able to account for new experiences, ideas and values. The second group will be made up of those who desire to reconstruct radically the traditional framework of thought and from within this reconstructed framework attempt to account for previous achievements—intellectual and other—which are of enduring worth.⁴

My approach falls into the second of the two groups—a fact that describes it rather than argues for or against it. All communication is difficult but it becomes more difficult still when

its subject is religion: only a deliberate effort to clarify one's assumptions, so far as possible, makes success at all likely. Because we use the same language and are wrestling with somewhat the same problems we tend to ignore the fact that we often use that language quite differently. For example, most of those concerned with doing something about religion, whether they label their *doing* renewal, reform or reconstruction, would probably agree on the following needs: to remove the opposition between "sacred" and "secular"; to overcome stultifying religious passivity; to relate religion to concrete human problems; to avoid reducing religion to abstract formulas; to liberate the believer from those institutions which hamper personal development; to have religion lead us more deeply into the world rather than to escape from it. Despite widespread agreement on these needs, attempts to fulfill them will differ sharply because of the diverse assumptions which undergird such attempts.

Before mentioning a few of my own controlling assumptions, I would like to underline the inevitability, diversity and unprovability of all assumptions. Morris Raphael Cohen expressed this point exceptionally well when he stated:

The way to make progress in any field of learning is not by resolving to free ourselves of dogmatic assumptions—such resolutions are vain—but by making clear to ourselves what are the various assumptions that are possible, and thus envisaging our position as one of a great number. This widens our sympathetic understanding and breaks the backbone of fanaticism. It makes us humble because it indicates to us that ultimately we cannot prove the truth of our fundamental assumptions, for our fundamental assumptions determine the kind of a world which we can perceive and the world of phenomena is wider than that of our knowledge.⁵

For the purposes of this essay, it is most important to emphasize my assumption that any symbols, concepts, categories or

doctrines concerning God, morality or religion are grounded in a specific metaphysics and are permeated by a raft of metaphysical assumptions.

Having introduced the highly controverted issue of "metaphysics" it might be well for me to indicate just how I will be using this term. Prescinding from the numerous and complex technical philosophical questions surrounding the issue of metaphysics, I will throughout this essay employ "metaphysics" interchangeably with "world view." I will understand by these terms both an angle of vision, or perspective from which reality is viewed, and a set of principles or assumptions⁶ which guide and direct us in our efforts to understand reality in its most comprehensive dimensions. I would add here that I subscribe to a kind of metaphysical pluralism, since no metaphysics—including the one proposed in this work—is fully adequate to the human situation. I do not rule out the propriety and even the necessity of evaluating competing metaphysical claims,⁷ but I refuse to be forced into any all-or-nothing interpretation. Further, I do not think that it is possible ultimately to prove or refute a metaphysics. I share John Herman Randall's reading of the history of philosophy: "No great philosophy has ever been refuted: it has been discarded as irrelevant to another type of experience."⁸ Hence, there is no escaping an irreducible option: the act of faith at the base of every metaphysics.

Another and more specific assumption which I wish to note is that the traditional doctrine of God in Western or Christian history is closely, though not exclusively, bound up with Greek metaphysics. Following this, I will also assume that the Greek categories which served the Christian faith so well in the past have become increasingly more irrelevant to the developing structure of human life. Hence, I believe that a radical reconstruction of our doctrine of God is in order—a reconstruction which will not simply assimilate new data and insights to a central core of unchanging doctrine but one which will dare to challenge and attempt to supplant many of what heretofore

have been considered indispensable elements or principles of that doctrine.

Needless to say, no significant reconstruction of the doctrine of God can be attempted without also involving the reconstruction of religious truth, morality and religion. It is my contention that such reconstructions can take place only within a metaphysics which is radically different from that classical metaphysics within which traditional doctrine has been formed and is still being expressed. Hence, in the first chapter I will describe briefly, and without argument or pretense of proof, the metaphysics which is the framework for my reflections on the reconstruction of God, truth, morality and religion. This world view is fundamentally that which emerged from the classical period of American philosophy, particularly in the works of William James and John Dewey. My contention is that this tradition has rich resources for a reconstruction of religion and indeed of all human experiences. Two cautions must be urged, however. First, I am not advancing this tradition as the only worth-while approach to the problems under consideration. As I have already indicated, I believe that a variety of metaphysics is needed if we are to fully exploit the richness and depth of human experience and the world in which it operates. The second caution is that I intend neither to appropriate James and Dewey in the cause of religion nor to show that deep-down they were Christians. I merely claim that their thought provides possibilities for an enriched development and transformation of religion and Christianity. On my hypothesis, however, the result of a dynamic transaction between the philosophies of these men and Christianity would be something different from what either were or are, considered independently.⁹

Since I will make repeated use of the terms *pragmatism*, *reconstruction* and *religion*, it is necessary that I indicate something of what I mean by each. Charles Sanders Peirce, the "founder" of pragmatism, and James as well insisted that pragmatism was a method, not a metaphysics. This distinction is

acceptable and even necessary as long as it does not become a dichotomy between method and metaphysics. Even if we take Peirce's restricted definition of pragmatism as a method whereby we render ideas clear in terms of their consequences, do we not thereby imply a different world from that in which ideas are made clear by an analysis which shows their internal consistency? The matter becomes more complicated when James describes pragmatism as a method whereby we *make* the truth. How different must a world be in which we "invent" the truth through acting upon ideas from a world in which we "discover" the truth by abstracting ideas which correspond to an already permanently structured reality? If pragmatism does not necessarily involve a processive world, it is eminently congenial to and congruent with such a world. In any event, regardless of how pragmatism is to be understood in James and Dewey, I will understand it as combining a methodological dimension with the process metaphysics or world view within which they reflected.¹⁰

I use the term *reconstruction* in order to take cognizance of both continuity and development and to avoid the polarities of mere repetition and total revolution. Since I will urge radical development and change, I wish to stress that not all change is destructive. I would argue, on the contrary, that change through reconstruction enables us to avoid change through revolution. Further, that such change is actually constructive in that it retains earlier insights and values, though in a transformed manner. This last is crucial, as we shall see, for reconstruction accounts for continuity through fuller inclusion in the world process rather than continuity by exclusion or isolation from this process. Another important connotation of reconstruction is that it is existential as well as theoretic. Any pragmatic reconstruction, whether of God, of law or of liturgy, always takes place within a living context which is personalistic, communitarian, existential and historical. Hence, no worth-while effort of

reconstruction can be restricted to or terminate in a system of ideas.

It would be inconsistent with my approach were I to attempt to define *religion*, either at the start or the finish of this essay. At the same time one could hardly call for a reconstruction unless there were some reality in need of reconstructing. I will assume, therefore, that we are aware of a phenomenon called religion which involves beliefs, ideas, symbols, practices and institutions distinguishable from other phenomena, such as art, science or politics. Though I am calling it a phenomenon, I agree with James that "the word 'religion' cannot stand for any single principle or essence, but is rather a collective name."¹¹ Further, I think that Dewey is correct when he states "that concretely there is no such thing as religion in the singular. There is only a multitude of religions."¹² I am aware that I am straddling "phenomenology" and "nominalism" but I think that this is what James and Dewey did. I believe it is consistent with their thought to say that they affirmed that terms might have a universal thrust without their corresponding to a universal essence. Such a combination of concrete locus and universal thrust is most relevant to a reconstruction of religion. Any reconstruction of religion must, in the first instance, be a reconstruction of that religion in which the reconstructor is involved; otherwise one falls into the trap of abstract and empty theorizing. At the same time there can be no significant reconstruction which is parochial, which would not have some aspect of universality. Hence, I have decided to speak of religion, despite the fact that my primary locus or context is Christianity or, more specifically, Roman Catholicism.¹³ A few words concerning this Roman Catholic context are, perhaps, in order.

Not too many years ago Catholicism and change seemed to stand for polar opposites. In a world in which the reality and all-pervasiveness of change had become a commonplace, Roman Catholicism stood alone in its insistence upon absolutely im-

mutable truths, dogmas and institutions. The metaphor of the Church as a "rock" was employed by friend and foe—the first stressing the virtues of solidity, recognizability and durability, the latter deriding it as static, unadaptable and dense. The image of an immutable Church, fundamentally fashioned and structured by a divine activity, gave its members a strong sense of identity and a clear awareness of purpose. Even non-Catholics derived an indirect benefit from such absolute claims since the Roman Catholic Church furnished a visible target and a clearly identifiable opponent in a world which seemed to be collapsing into a vague and indistinguishable flux. Not a few non-Catholics expressed a certain envy of, and nostalgia for, the charming and passionate innocence displayed by Roman Catholics. How often one heard or read that "at least Catholics *know* what they believe and they are not ashamed to state it and stand up for it." The Protestant theologian Martin Marty calls attention to this when he states: "Many Protestants and Jews like the idea of Catholics keeping Latin and incense so that there is a fixed point in a turning world, an ultimate center of irrelevance to which one can repair when the world is too much with us. Many non-Christians like the idea of Catholics hanging on to what looks to them like absurd theology rather than taking on what will have to sound to them like a theology that could get in the way."¹⁴

Actually this simple, definite and immutable Church existed more in the minds and imaginations of both Catholics and non-Catholics than it did in the full life of the Church. From the first moment of its existence, the Church has been changing, sometimes radically, mostly imperceptibly, but always changing. The centrality of its alleged immutability emerged in great part as a defense against a modern consciousness which more and more saw man and reality in terms of process. The Church's view of itself as characterized by absolutely immutable and certain dogmas reached a high point (or low point, depending on one's perspective) in Vatican I. At that moment in its life

the Roman Catholic Church seemed determined to reject almost every feature of modern thought and experience whether in the realms of philosophy, politics or social action. The definition of papal infallibility stood as a symbol of defiance in the face of a world that was rapidly losing its absolutes and certainties. The prophetic insight of a Marx or Nietzsche (and ironically, perhaps, of a Pius IX) became, in the twentieth century, a part of the "conventional wisdom." Two devastating world wars, the deliberate destruction of millions of innocent people simply because of their race, the creation of concentration camps and processes which raised calculated dehumanization to an art, the production of the "ultimate" weapon of destruction—all combined to destroy whatever vestiges remained of a stable world order and a clear-cut system of absolute and certain values. "What can I believe with assurance?" "Is there any meaning to my life?" "Can I fully commit myself to any values?"—such questions became, by mid-twentieth century, questions asked by men in all spheres of life and not simply by esoteric and pessimistic European philosophers.

One might have expected that as other men became more tentative in their assertions and less sure of their values, Roman Catholics would move in the other direction by intensifying and extending the clarity and certainty claimed by Vatican I. In one sphere—let us call it the evident institutional sphere—such was the case. But in another sphere, which we might designate as that of reflective articulation or serious theology, just the opposite was happening. True, even here there was no attempt to attack head-on or directly question the absoluteness, certitude and immutability of the fundamental dogmas and institutions of Roman Catholicism. Nevertheless, the qualifications, refinements and restrictions which were added were having what we can now see as an eroding effect upon the "rocklike" certainty of the Church. The recent history of the doctrine of papal infallibility is an example of this erosion. The enormous and terrifying weight of the claim, combined with

an increasing narrowing of the validating conditions, has reduced the possibility of its exercise almost to the vanishing point. (It is significant that the only undisputed exercise of papal infallibility since Vatican I was the defining of the dogma of the Assumption. It is perhaps even more significant that only Protestants seem to have taken this seriously.)

It is true that despite the almost total nonuse of papal infallibility there has been an unfortunate fallout from this doctrine in the forms of "creeping infallibility" and "papal cultism." The first might be described as the attaching of an almost infallible weight to any papal statement ranging from the most solemn encyclical to the Pope's remarks to the Italian midwives or bicycle riders. "Papal cultism" manifested itself in the reluctance to express any criticism of the Pope except in language so abstruse and indirect as to need a hundred years of scholarly interpretation in order to decipher it. What is amazing is not that such attitudes became part of Roman Catholicism but that they were so short-lived. Certainly since the Second World War a large number of Catholic intellectuals (usually labeled liberals) were castigating, in conversation, if not in publication, these features of the Church. Since Vatican II, the Pope has been fair game for everyone from erudite Dutch theologians to letter writers to the editor of *The National Catholic Reporter*. Thus, the widespread critical response to Pope Paul's statements on celibacy and birth control was but the boiling over of something that had been simmering for a long time.

The point to be stressed is not merely that there has been a great change in the attitude of Roman Catholics toward the Pope, but rather that this change is symptomatic of a radical upheaval within Roman Catholicism. I do not consider it hyperbole or alarmism to say that the Roman Catholic Church finds itself in its greatest crisis in history—greater even than at the time of the Reformation. The irony here is that this crisis is due in no small part to the modern liberalizing changes in

ideas and institutions which have been made and are being made as a result of Vatican II. To a great extent the Catholic conservatives were more prophetically perceptive than the liberals. They saw that you cannot make significant changes in accepted theology, morality, liturgy and institutional practices without bringing about the destruction of many of the traditional identifying marks of Catholicism. The Catholic liberal's insistence on changing "accidentals" without changing "essentials" has proven more viable in theory than in practice.

There is an almost traumatic dimension attached to the experience of radical change. Such trauma is by no means restricted to Roman Catholics, but because of the past and continued insistence by most Roman Catholics on the centrality of immutability, whether concerning religious doctrine, morality or the nature of God, the trauma is immeasurably heightened. The overwhelming number of Catholics from the Pope to the average layman cannot conceive of a Catholicism and hence of a Christianity which would not be characterized by the mark of immutability. It is this view which I am directly calling into question. It is not simply that I believe that Christianity can be reconciled with a radically developing world; I would contend that it can survive only if it is seen as inseparably bound up with such a world, partaking of both the difficulties and possibilities which this world presents. The "bite" of this assertion becomes evident only when we reflect upon its implications for, and effects upon, our traditional beliefs and institutions. I will endeavor throughout this work to suggest what some of those implications and effects are and might be. For the most part these suggestions will be couched in the form of hypotheses, some of which will strike many as outrageous and even offensive. It is most proper that these hypotheses bring forth criticism from those who see the issues to which they refer in a different light—assertions followed by critical responses are, after all, what intellectual activity is all about. Much more important, however, than the merit or lack of merit attached

to my particular hypotheses is whether or not I, as a Roman Catholic, am permitted to engage in such activity. I firmly believe, needless to say, that perhaps the most crucial need within the Roman Catholic community is to avoid closing out such hypothesizing. Undoubtedly much of it will be superficial, imprecise and, in that case, short-lived. But if we have learned anything from the way in which human thought and experience develops, it is that only by permitting a certain "wildness" of thought can the community bring forth its creative thinkers. Roman Catholicism, particularly over the last four hundred years, has paid a high price for its suppression of hypotheses, in the dearth of creative thinkers who have emerged from and continued living within the Church. To ask people to criticize or think creatively only when they have a completely developed position capable of meeting immediately every objection that orthodoxy can pose is to ask the impossible. A thinker of Teilhard de Chardin's caliber produces a body of thought shot through with limitations, inadequacies and errors—what can much lesser minds hope to achieve?

My insistence upon the right to present, defend and live by the results of one's own reflections is not to be interpreted as a defense of unbridled individualism. As I shall indicate in several parts of this work, the dichotomy between the person and the community is artificial and destructive. One thinks, acts, lives and exists *only* in community (or communities) but if a community is to avoid becoming a destructive collectivity it must allow the persons who constitute it to exercise their creativity, whether great or small, in an effort to move the community to an even richer life.

There is a strong temptation at this point to enter into a long-winded apology for being so presumptuous as to attempt to handle the profound questions which are the subject matter of this work in such a short and obviously unfinished essay. Actually, we should be well past this attitude of debilitating humility. In point of fact no one is ever adequate to such

questions whether in an article, a book or a dozen books. Only the community is adequate, because it alone has a life sufficiently long to absorb and correct the partial insights of its members. The need of the moment would not seem to be for ultraorthodox, well-rounded, endlessly qualified and eminently safe restatements of traditional positions. Rather what seems desperately needed is some freewheeling hypothesizing on questions that are tearing out the insides of an increasing number of Catholics who fervently desire to be faithful to the demands which contemporary thought and life make upon them and at the same time not to separate themselves from participation in the Church.

I am not unaware of the grave dangers involved in the approach I am suggesting. There is an attitude, bordering on the sentimental and Pollyannish, which characterizes a number of those who think of themselves as liberal, Catholic or other. This attitude tends to blind itself to anything but the positive features involved in a radically changing world. I wish to make clear at the outset that a reconstruction such as I am calling for demands the greatest openness and involves a tremendous risk. John Dewey has noted the dire consequences of such an undertaking: "Let us admit the case of the conservative," he cautions, "if we once start thinking, no one can guarantee where we shall come out, except that many objects, ends, and institutions are surely doomed. Every thinker puts some portion of an apparently stable world in peril and no one can wholly predict what will emerge in its place."¹⁵ It is my belief that only the need and hope for the bringing forth of a new world and a new man can make taking such a risk worth-while. But again Dewey warns us that "no one discovers a new world without forsaking an old one; and no one discovers a new world who exacts guarantee in advance for what it shall be, or who puts the act of discovery under bonds with respect to what the new world shall do to him when it comes into vision."¹⁶

Needless to say, the discovery or creation of a new world is not a task to be accomplished in one or in a hundred attempts such as this. There will have to be a great community effort involving a plurality of approaches which share some assumptions and principles but differ in others. Each approach will be obliged to be somewhat cognizant of other approaches but will avoid premature synthesizing of diverse insights. Each approach will be made from a particular perspective or point of view or metaphysics which will give it order, form and direction but will, at the same time, limit it and cut it off from the insights gained through other approaches. As William James has noted, "Any partial view whatever of the world tears the part out of its relations, leaves out some truth concerning it, is untrue of it, falsifies it."¹⁷ James is here presupposing "a pluralistic, restless universe, in which no single point of view can ever take in the whole scene."¹⁸

Whether or not one agrees with James that we inhabit "a pluralistic universe," pluralism most assuredly describes the present situation in philosophy and theology and I am suggesting that it can be an asset rather than a liability. I maintain that it is possible to commit oneself to reflection within a particular set of categories without presuming that these are the only worth-while ones. At the same time, I do not rule out, indeed I hope for, a kind of "convergence" of the many insights which emerge from a diversity of metaphysics. Perhaps the most significant long-run test of the important and enduring insights of human thought and experience are those which emerge from and remain central to a variety of metaphysics. Such convergences, however, can never be more than guidelines to further thought and experience. Any attempt to use them as "proofs" or to bring them together in a new synthesis is itself another metaphysics and hence subject to the limitations which have already been noted.

If, then, there is a sense in which the primary focus of this essay can properly be said to be Roman Catholic, it is not

thereby, I hope, parochial. I am no longer concerned with any Church or religious community which is not in the process of becoming coextensive with man. For the time being, I bracket the question of how the Church *in* and *within* which I believe and would like to help create would differ from humanism. I bracket this question not because it is unimportant but because it is much too important to receive a neat, clear-cut answer, at least from me. At the same time I profess a belief in the convergence of an authentic developmental Catholicism and an authentic developmental humanism. While I no longer believe in a Christianity that is in fundamental conflict with humanism, I think it is too simple, sentimental and descriptively untrue to say that they are identical. Further, while I lament and would like to overcome the divisions that characterize the human community—divisions due in part at least to the various religions—I do not believe that these divisions can be overcome simply by departing from those communities, political as well as religious, in which we are located and which, for better and for worse, have formed us. It is already evident that a unified human community will not be achieved by simple fiat nor by some kind of overnight synthesis. We will inevitably experiment with many approaches to this eminently worthy goal. I am simply suggesting that one approach worth exploring is that which endeavors to release the creative potential for universality which is *believed* to be present in a number of religious faiths. I am persuaded, however, that this creative potential can be released only by a willingness to open one's self and one's community to the insight and experience of the total human community. Thus, paradoxically, we can be faithful to the deepest levels of our religious experience and vision only by being open and responsive to the experience and vision of others. I make clear throughout this work that, in my opinion, a willingness to give more than lip service to openness and development will inevitably involve the surrender of much of what we at one time held or now may hold dear.

I maintain, therefore, that while a particular and important dimension of my undertaking can be designated Roman Catholic, it is not necessarily thereby isolated from that search and struggle in which all reflective men are involved. The same combination of particularity and universality would characterize a Jew, Protestant or atheist who might be grappling with many of the same problems which occupy me in this work. I would insist that the central concerns of this essay are ones which in some fashion touch all men. The need to devise means for living in a radically changing world and to find meaning and hope in the absence of absolute certainty is certainly not peculiar to Roman Catholics. The need to fashion an ethical life which avoids the Scylla of absolutism and Charybdis of nihilism confronts all reflective men. Finally, the necessity for transforming our institutions in such a way as to minimize the loss and destruction of many values which they brought forth but are no longer able to sustain is surely one of the most pressing problems confronting civilized man.

NOTES

1. Whatever disagreements one might have with the "death of God" theologians, Thomas J. J. Altizer and William Hamilton, I think that we are all in their debt for having thrown the spotlight on this collapse and forced to the surface what many were glossing over or at best playing down by emphasizing signs of hope.

2. Criticism of religion is a necessary prelude to any reconstruction. Cf. Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), abridged edition, p. 185. "The first word, therefore, to be spoken by religion to the people of our time must be a word spoken against religion."

3. I do not mean to give the impression either that there were no positive values involved in the *collapse* of the Western-world value system or that there are not already under way efforts at reconstruction. Paradoxically, the very movements which contributed to the collapse, such as the political, industrial and scientific revolutions, were themselves reconstructions and provide the resources for further and more conscious reconstructions. Hence, I do not subscribe to any reading of history which would see the modern era as a *decline*, absolutely or relatively. Losses there have been, but the positive possibilities which have emerged are tremendous. The potential for reconstruction is proportionate to those possibilities.

4. These are general tendencies; neither does, could or should exist in some pure form. For example, any vital thought, however continuous it endeavors to be with earlier ideas, principles or categories, cannot help but realize some degree of reconstruction even of its most basic and ultimate principles. On the other hand, the most radical reconstruction begins from an inherited intellectual framework which is the result of earlier efforts at coping with the human situation.

5. Morris R. Cohen, *A Preface to Logic* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), p. 200.

6. Cf. Susanne K. Langer, *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), Vol. I, p. 316, where she refers to "metaphysical; not in the derogatory sense which scientists all too often give to that term, but in its perfectly respectable sense of dealing with the basic assumptions implicit in our formulation of 'facts.'"

7. The necessity for such evaluation should not blind us to the formidable difficulties in such an undertaking. John Dewey has expressed a key reason why so much of philosophical criticism misses the mark: "It is not easy at the best to move from a system of ideas having one center and order into a system having a different focus and arrangement. Neither a critic nor myself

is responsible for the fact that every philosophical word employed is charged, in the degree of its importance, with ambiguities resulting from centuries of controversial discussions." *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, 2nd ed., Paul Arthur Schilpp, ed. (New York: Tudor, 1951; first published in 1939), pp. 517-518.

8. John Herman Randall, Jr., *The Career of Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), Vol. I, p. 11.

9. I am treating the thought of James and Dewey as expressing a similar if not unified viewpoint. In a more extensive treatment, it would be necessary to call attention to a number of differences between the two thinkers—differences of content, style, concern and the like. For example, James is characterized by a kind of Augustinian "metaphysical restlessness" which is *apparently* absent in Dewey. Also, James *seems* willing to say almost anything about God if it gives satisfaction and consolation to anyone, while Dewey is much more suspicious of the entire tradition and enterprise of religion. Notice that I hedge by saying "seems" and "apparently." I do this because I would argue that despite their differences James does not condone indiscriminate religious emoting nor justify every kind of satisfaction and that Dewey on the other hand has a sensitivity to the religious dimension of man and the world which does not suffer comparison with James.

10. Cf. H. S. Thayer, *Meaning and Action* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1968), p. 454. "There are philosophers who believe that a method of analysis and critical evaluation of ideas does entail metaphysical and moral commitments as well; and there are philosophers who deny this. The pragmatists, despite Peirce's inconsistent pronouncements . . . are members of the first group." Thayer's work is subtitled "A Critical History of Pragmatism," and it is a superb presentation of the historical background of the pragmatic movement, its chief exponents and the development and interaction of the central themes of the pragmatic tradition.

11. William James, *The Writings of William James—A Comprehensive Edition*, edited with an "Introduction" and "Annotated Bibliography" by John J. McDermott (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 741. Referred to hereafter as *Writings*.

12. John Dewey, *A Common Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), p. 7.

13. For a fine statement on the necessity of recognizing and accepting one's immediate religious context while continually working to bring forth a richer and more universal context, see Rosemary Ruether, "Post-Ecumenical Christianity," *The Ecumenist* (November-December, 1966), pp. 3-7. For a further development of her position, see *The Church Against Itself* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967).

14. Martin E. Martin, *The National Catholic Reporter*, November 29, 1967, p. 10.

15. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (New York: Dover Publications, 1958), p. 222.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

17. James, *Writings*, p. 513.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 606.

CHAPTER I

PRAGMATISM'S PROCESSIVE AND RELATIONAL WORLD

To say that we inhabit a changing or processive world is to mouth a commonplace; but to affirm a world in which no reality or sphere of reality is unchanging, is something else. In Western civilization, at least, the overwhelming number of men have always recognized that we live in a changing world. From the time of the earliest Greek thinkers, however, there have been repeated efforts to explain the change which we experience in terms of some more primordial reality or principle. The vast difference in their principles of explanation need not concern us here. What is significant for our purposes, however, is that the really real, the essential principles of reality, reality as it is in itself, being-as-such or any other category employed to describe ultimate reality is always characterized by immutability. While a bit simplistic, I think that it is basically accurate to say that the dominant mind-set of Western man up to the nineteenth century was one which assigned change to a superficial or secondary sphere of reality. Today, however, most thinkers are highly suspicious of any metaphysical dualism which divides reality into substantial or essential unchanging principles and accidental changing ones. Hence, it has become customary in recent years to contrast the Greek or classical world views and

the contemporary world view by designating the first as "static" and the second as "dynamic" or "historical" or "evolutionary." I will presuppose this and similar such contrasts throughout this essay but a brief comment is in order as to what is and what is not to be understood by such an admittedly simplistic division.

Perhaps the quickest way to indicate the position assumed by me is to state flatly that language is viewed as primarily functional rather than representative. Thus the categories "static world view" or "processive world view" are not to be understood as mirroring or corresponding to some entity or even to some philosophical position which is identically expressed in many thinkers. Rather, as with all categories or metaphors,¹ this is a construct which is useful insofar as it enables us to handle and make sense of a variety and diversity of phenomena—intellectual, artistic, sociological, psychological and religious. Needless to say, such constructs are not completely arbitrary and must continually manifest their serviceability in relation to our ever-increasing accumulation of phenomena.

A formidable argument against using such large-scale categories as classical or contemporary is that the closer we study a particular age or an individual thinker the more we are struck by its or his uniqueness. Hence, one can and must speak of quite different worlds when comparing Plato and Aristotle, Bonaventure and Aquinas, Descartes and Spinoza. Also, the differences which characterize the fourth century B.C., the thirteenth century and the seventeenth century are enormous. To employ, therefore, an umbrella category such as "the classical world view" which covers all these men and ages demands some justification. In defense of such categorization I would argue that different as these men and ages are when compared to each other, they have striking and significant similarities when compared to twentieth-century thinkers. A few of the key similarities are: the world is a cosmos or an ordered world; it possesses this order independently of man; this world is struc-

tured by absolute and unchanging principles or essences; this world or reality is permeated by mind or reason of which human reason is a particularized expression; the task of human knowledge—scientific knowledge—is to discover and thereby mirror or correspond to those universal essences by which reality is structured; hence, knowledge is concerned with that which is universal and unchanging rather than the particular and changing.

If the category "classical metaphysics" can be and is misleading, then that of "contemporary metaphysics" can be positively distorting. Perhaps the only statement that can be made with confident assurance about philosophy in the twentieth century is that it is characterized by variety and diversity. The diversity is not restricted to different solutions to common problems—such diversity has always characterized a philosophical age—rather the diversity found within contemporary philosophy stems from differing and conflicting views as to just what philosophy is and what constitutes legitimate philosophical problems. Aristotle reads as an unbroken continuation of Plato when compared to the gap which separates an A. J. Ayer and a Martin Heidegger, a Gabriel Marcel and a John Dewey.

In the twentieth century, the philosophical mantle is claimed by thinkers whose views are so widely separated and deeply divided that one is almost led to conclude that they inhabit different worlds. And yet I still believe that it is defensible to speak of "contemporary metaphysics," at least as expressing a shared direction and a dominant emphasis. Admittedly, however, one must be even more tentative here than when speaking of classical metaphysics since contemporary metaphysics is still very much in the process of formation—it exists and is able to be grasped only in bits and pieces and it remains shot through with shadows and obscurities.

Fortunately, the formidable difficulties which would be involved in attempting to articulate this burgeoning metaphysics need not be considered since this essay will be restricted to but

one expression of contemporary thought—pragmatism. Even here there is no pretense of presenting pragmatism in its precise historical form nor of explicating all of its metaphysical characteristics. After all, one might well dispute whether there is any such doctrine as “pragmatic metaphysics.” Certainly the phrase cannot stand for any formally articulated or systematized metaphysical system. If men such as Chauncey Wright, Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey are taken as the chief founders and expounders of pragmatism, it is quite apparent that there are numerous significant differences in the thought of each. Nevertheless, there is a sufficient commonality of approach and sharing of assumptions to warrant the rather vague phrase “the metaphysics of pragmatism.”²

Thus, in what follows in this chapter, I will be drawing upon a few of the central ideas of James and Dewey in an attempt to describe in broad outline a pragmatic metaphysics or world view. It must be stressed that this is not an attempt to “prove” the superiority of this world view over others, much less to show that it is absolutely or completely adequate to the problems confronting mankind. At the same time, I wish to state most firmly that I *believe* that a developed, refined and reconstructed pragmatism has the most possibilities for making some headway against those problems.

The World as Open or Processive

If obliged to select one term which most appropriately describes the world in which man finds himself, pragmatism would choose “unfinished,” or its more positive equivalent, “open.” John Dewey comments concerning William James:

Long after “pragmatism” in any sense save as an application of his *Weltanschauung* shall have passed into a not unhappy oblivion, the fundamental idea of an open universe in which uncertainty, choice, hypotheses, novelties and pos-

sibilities are naturalized will remain associated with the name of James; the more he is studied in his historic setting the more original and daring will the idea appear.³

There is a fundamental and radical difference between a "world involving process" and a "world in process." The first acknowledges process or change as a real and even important dimension of reality but it ultimately grounds and explains this process in terms of some kind of immutable reality. No such metaphysical dualism is permissible from the perspective of those who affirm a "world in process." The distinctive feature of this viewpoint is that the world or nature or reality⁴ is affirmed as processive through-and-through. There is no being nor any part or sphere of reality which stands outside or remains untouched by process. Hence, the change, process, growth or development which will be presupposed throughout this essay is immeasurably more radical and pervasive than is usually implied by those terms, particularly when they are applied to religion.

Nothing, perhaps, more sharply and succinctly conveys the distinctive feature of the kind of processive world view suggested by pragmatism than its interpretation of *novelty* or "the new." In one of his late letters, James asserted: "I think the centre of my whole *Anschaung*, since years ago I read Renouvier, has been the belief that something is doing in the universe, and that *novelty* is real."⁵ As in the case of change, of course, everyone admits the reality of novelty but not everyone understands it in the same way. The "new" affirmed by pragmatism is not absolute in the sense of having come into existence out of nothing. The "new" always emerges from or grows out of what is already in existence; however, it cannot be understood as simply a particularization of an essence that is eternal or absolutely permanent. The processive world envisioned by pragmatism is characterized by the emergence of radically novel events and realities. That is to say, events and realities emerge

which are not simply the actualization of pre-existing potencies, whether such potencies are ultimately located in something called Nature or in the reality of God.

It is important to note that the notion of a "new man" and a "new world" is not confined to pragmatism. One encounters it today in various forms in a number of thinkers with diverse backgrounds and from a variety of intellectual disciplines. Man and the world, it is maintained, are in the process of becoming a new man and a new world. I would suggest that such an assertion should be taken as something more than a rhetorical or metaphorical ploy. The distinguished psychologist Gardner Murphy understands it so seriously that he is led to say, "It seems virtually certain that mankind, having created for itself a new environment and having undergone various transformations in the process, will not recognize itself in the mirror of a few thousand years hence."⁶ In a similar vein, the Jesuit paleontologist, Teilhard de Chardin, has said: "Our modern world was created in less than 10,000 years, and in the past 200 years it has changed more than in all the preceding millennia. Have we ever thought of what our planet may be like, psychologically, in a million years time?"⁷

Such assertions of radical change are not restricted to those thinkers with a scientific background, as is evidenced in the following statements by the Roman Catholic theologian, Karl Rahner:

Human self-creation means quite simply that today man is changing himself. To be more precise: Man is consciously and deliberately changing himself. . . .

Man is in the process of fashioning himself. He still gropes to understand his goals, and is well aware that their accomplishment lies in the remote future. Yet he is also aware that the tempo has increased, that the utopias of today are the commonplaces of tomorrow. Man today finds that he is manipulable. A radically new age is coming—new in every

dimension. . . . We can form no detailed picture of human life in the year 2000, but we can be sure that the world tomorrow will be different from the world today. Man will change himself to a degree previously undreamed of.⁸

Such texts could be multiplied indefinitely but it would be wrong to give the impression that this would prove or even render crystal-clear what is being expressed by these thinkers. Other thinkers—those who are more analytically inclined—find such statements as the above repugnant due to their generality and vagueness. Conceding the difficulties and limitations attached to such expression, it still must be insisted that they play a necessary and indispensable role in the development of human life. If obliged to categorize or locate such expressions, they might be designated “pointer statements” of the kind which compose philosophical *vision*. Such vision is always incomplete, somewhat confusing and inevitably vague; but without such vision, some seeing ahead, however vaguely, men would still be in the cave.

We must always be on guard against becoming bemused by the visionary but unless we are willing to struggle with the unclear and undeveloped and most assuredly unproven insights of our more creative frontier thinkers, we have no hope of breaking the chains which bind every “present” in which man exists. We must take these insights for what they and they alone can do. These are hints, suggestions, large-scale hypotheses which can serve as guidelines and stimuli to further reflection and action. We know from experience that they will not always prove fruitful but we also know from experience that no fruits will be forthcoming unless men are willing and daring enough to move out beyond where they are at any moment—beyond where they are scientifically, artistically, politically and religiously.

In stressing the novelty which characterizes processive reality, we should not become oblivious to the dangers of such an

emphasis. Long ago Josiah Royce warned us against "the siren call of novelty"⁹ and the false pursuit of the "new." There can be little doubt that a grave temptation of contemporary man is his frivolous concern for novelties, which are increasingly enervating. It is, however, quite unnecessary to give any such warning against an undue concern with the new to those who have been formed by the major religious traditions. An almost fatal flaw of these traditions has been to deny or at best diminish the reality of the novelty which we encounter and which we can help to bring into existence. They have failed to grasp the extent to which the possibility of real novelty in all spheres of reality gives life its zest and excitement as well as its risk and uncertainty. I would go even further and suggest that meaning and hope depend in great part upon both the possibility and the actuality of the *new*.

If it can be said that the tendency of many contemporary thinkers is to exaggerate the role of novelty, then it can be said with equal justification that most earlier thinkers exaggerated the dimension of regularity in the universe. It is to the credit of James and Dewey that they made an effort at least to take cognizance of both aspects of reality. The novelty affirmed by these two men is not the novelty of sheer flux which would reduce each moment to an absolutely new, discontinuous and unrelated atom. Quite the contrary. In discussing the role of novelty in the thought of James, John J. McDermott stresses the point that "... novelty can be seen as a function of continuity, for the meaning of novelty refers not only to totally new experiences, but also to prior experiences, when had from a different conceptual context."¹⁰

There are regularity and permanence as well as irregularity and novelty in the world but none are absolute; all are relative and contextual. "Change gives meaning to permanence and recurrence makes novelty possible," Dewey tells us.¹¹ And James warns against the man "whose beliefs play fast and loose with the order which realities follow in his experience."¹²

Both men allow for an aspect of permanence but they also refuse to ascribe to the permanence or order manifest in the world a reality in itself—to make it *the* real and to relegate change and novelty to the realm of appearance or at best credit it with superficial or accidental reality. “Incompleteness and precariousness is a trait [*sic*] that must be given footing of the same rank as the finished and fixed.”¹³ We inhabit a world both stable and precarious—a world in which uncertainty, unpredictability and uncontrollability are as real as constancy and regularity. It cannot be emphasized too strongly, however, that these features do not exist in some form of metaphysical juxtaposition or dualism. Nature is a *flow* within which we differentiate some features which are more enduring than others, but this does not justify separating those features from the ongoing relational process in which they are encountered. Therefore, while it is permissible and even necessary to acknowledge traits of reality which are *functionally* permanent, such traits must not be postulated as *ontologically* permanent.

According to pragmatism then, the world that is disclosed in experience is neither the eternally ordered world of Greek thought nor the absurd and fundamentally chaotic world which undergirds certain forms of contemporary existentialism. Though the world in which we live does not meet all our demands and satisfy all our desires, it is not an essentially hostile world—it is responsive to our need for and efforts to achieve order. It does not fulfill this need, however, by presenting us with order complete and final but by confronting us with the possibility of achieving order through our activities, intellectual and other. Pragmatism allows for, indeed insists upon, the reality of order and regularity but these are always relative and in great part result from man's transactions within reality.

James and Dewey not only reject any view of nature which sees it as hostile to man's efforts; they also reject any view of nature as fully rational and completely realized independently of man. According to James, the history of the human mind

bears continuing witness that "the inmost nature of the reality is congenial to *powers*" which man possesses.¹⁴ Further, he maintained that "in our cognitive as well as in our active life we are creative. We *add*, both to the subject and to the predicate part of reality. The world stands really malleable, waiting its final touches at our hands."¹⁵

Dewey also affirmed both the congeniality of nature and the creativity of man. This is evidenced in his description of reason or intelligence in terms of possibilities. It was his contention that, though "nature intrinsically is neither rational nor irrational," it "is intelligible and understandable."¹⁶ Dewey goes on to say that "Nature *has* intelligible order as its possession in the degree in which we by our own overt operations realize potentialities contained in it."¹⁷

Another way of expressing what is involved in the processive world of pragmatism would be to say that it is fundamentally, through-and-through, temporal. This has been implicit in everything we have said thus far about reality—that it is unfinished, that it is shot through with possibilities, that it involves real novelty and that abstract, ideal unity is not a reality. As much as for Bergson and Whitehead, time for James and Dewey can truly be said to "bite into reality"; there can be no question of explaining it away or relegating it to an inferior realm of reality. Though not referring specifically to James and Dewey, the following statement by Robert Johann could well serve as a concise description of their view of time:

Time and the world are no longer preliminaries to the main event; they help to constitute it. Time is not simply duration, the continuance of what already exists, a span given man to prove himself worthy of heaven. Time is the creative process itself, in which the real is coming to birth.¹⁸

Pragmatism, therefore, presents us with a world in process but also one which has a place for order, regularity and intelligibility. Most important is the distinctive role which man is

called upon to play in a world that is open and unfinished. Man's task is to contribute to the ordering of the world rather than simply to mirror or contemplate it. Man is a participator in, not a mere spectator of, the ongoing creation of the world. "Nature as it exists at any particular time," Dewey tells us, "is a challenge, rather than a completion; it provides possible starting points and opportunities rather than final ends."¹⁰ The world or reality, then, is in process, in the making, and man, continuous with it, shares in the making and the being made.

In everything that has been said up to this point it is abundantly evident that pragmatism's view of the world as open explicitly and emphatically rejects any vestige of post-Newtonianism which would reduce nature to a closed system, predetermined to unfold in a precise, rationally blueprinted way. Further, it denies the possibility of discovering a single key or law which would unlock nature's secrets, as though there were really nothing new, truly novel in the world. Pragmatism refuses to indulge in the game of parceling nature with premade pigeonholes which supposedly exhaust its variety and vitality. Instead, taking evolution seriously, it incorporates into its basic outlook the reality of change, of novelty and of possibilities that challenge man to choose, to cooperate with nature and to live without absolute certitude either of nature or of his own choices.

The World as Relational

The world view of pragmatism is characterized not only by its affirmation of process but equally by its emphasis upon the reality and centrality of relations. As in the case of process, however, pragmatism cannot make any exclusive claim to a doctrine of relations. If one were to contrast contemporary metaphysics (in all its varied forms) with classical metaphysics, the most significant differences would be found to center around their respective views on process and relations. In twentieth-century thought one encounters a plethora of relational the-

ories—in such disciplines as physics, psychology and sociology, in such diverse thinkers as James, Dewey, Whitehead, Heidegger and Marcel, and in such contemporary philosophical movements as phenomenology, existentialism and personalism. It must be stressed, of course, that each of these manifestations of relationalism is somewhat unique; yet there is a common thrust in all of them. All reject the existence of isolated entities and affirm the centrality of relations in the constitution of man and the world. A few examples will quickly illustrate this point.

Alfred North Whitehead has given what is perhaps the most radical and succinct expression of relationalism: "There is no entity, not even God, 'which requires nothing but itself in order to exist.' . . . Every entity is in its essence social and requires the society in order to exist."²⁰ It was twentieth-century physics which suggested to Whitehead his metaphysics of relations:

The notion of self-sufficient isolation is not exemplified in modern physics. There are no essentially self-contained activities within limited regions. These passive geometrical relationships between substrata passively occupying regions have passed out of the picture. Nature is a theatre for the inter-relations of activities.²¹

In psychology, it was Kurt Lewin who developed a highly complex explanation of man which he described as "field theory."²² Gardner Murphy tells us that Lewin and "other creative thinkers in the land of 'field theory' have undertaken to show that the 'life space' of man is a function neither of man's inner existence nor of his environment nor of some bland formula regarding the interaction of the two but of *new creations of possible systems of relationship* between man and environment."²³ There is no direct or simple way of communicating what is involved here but something of what is at stake is expressed in the following: "Nothing springs from *me*, and nothing from my environment, but everything from the inter-

action, the 'life space' in which I, as a person, navigate." A bit further on Murphy states that "both man and his environment need to be seen not as two realities but as two phases of one reality."²⁴

For a splendid manifestation of the centrality of relationships in the realm of sociology, one need only consult *The Social Construction of Reality* by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann. The theme of this work is concisely expressed when the authors speak of "society as part of a human world, made by men, inhabited by men, and, in turn, making men, in an ongoing historical process."²⁵

Notable exemplifications of relationalism in contemporary philosophy can be found in Martin Heidegger's doctrine that man is a "being-in-the-world," and a "being-with,"²⁶ and in Gabriel Marcel's doctrine that there is no subject apart from intersubjectivity and his assertion that "to be is to-be-with."²⁷ The central feature of these forms of relationalism and others which are classified as existential or personalistic is the contention that men are not first individuals who then enter into relationships—we have no reality or individuality apart from our relationships. The Dutch theologian Luchsius Smits expresses this relational viewpoint most emphatically:

St. Thomas doesn't approach the problem of man this way. He speaks of the person in himself, or *in se*. Then, afterwards, he speaks of the person's relations to other things. But for us who think existentially, you can't have a person standing alone. For us, the person *is* relation. We no longer say that man is a social being because he needs to be helped. We say he is social because *his essence is being together* with other persons in a world.²⁸

Such texts as have just been cited are but superficial hints of the complexity and richness of a metaphysics of relations.²⁹ Though various forms of relationalism have been in the philosophical air for well over a century, there can be no claim,

in my opinion, to a satisfactorily articulated metaphysics of relations. The works of James and Dewey, for example, are filled with references to relations but in neither thinker do we have a fully consistent, to say nothing of a completed, doctrine of relations. This, of course, should not surprise us, for it is typical of the creative or frontier thinker that his thought will be a mixture, often a confused mixture, of the new and the old. Even Alfred North Whitehead, who has a more explicit and developed metaphysics of relations, made no claim to having removed all inconsistencies and resolved all problems in terms of relations. In keeping with the approach already initiated, I will simply try to indicate the implications and the positive possibilities attached to viewing the world as constituted by relations rather than by isolated entities.

The best introduction to what is implied by a metaphysics or world of relations is to contrast it with classical metaphysics, which is fundamentally non-relational. Now, of course, no serious thinker has ever denied relations in some sense any more than, as indicated above, they have denied some degree of process. In both instances, however, any contrast between classical metaphysics and pragmatic metaphysics depends upon the role assigned these features in the make-up of reality. Just as there is a "world of difference" between a "world involving process" and a "world in process," so there is a radical difference between a "world involving relations" and an essentially relational world. The first, a "world involving relations," admits that with the exception of God all beings have relations but these relations are said to be *accidental* and do not enter into the essential constitution of the beings which are comprised in the world. The second, an essentially relational world, is relational through-and-through—there are no individuals constituted in themselves apart from or in radical independence of their relations.

It is in the philosophy of God constructed by classical metaphysics that the subordinate role of relations is most evident.

The classical God is radically and essentially non-relational. As an absolutely self-sufficient being, a perfect substance, he is complete in himself.³⁰ The most extreme form of this non-relational God is found in Aristotle where God does not even have the relation of knowledge to things outside himself. Aquinas retains Aristotle's notion of God as Pure Act, absolutely self-sufficient and complete in himself. For obvious reasons, however, Aquinas could not affirm a God radically isolated from man and the world. Hence, he was led to develop a doctrine whereby creatures were related to God in a relation of ontological dependence but God was not related to them. This allowed Aquinas to acknowledge the dependence of things upon God while in no way jeopardizing God's eternal and immutable self-sufficiency. Thus, God is characterized by his radical and unique "independence"—he alone can be without relations.³¹

The subordinate role assigned to relations by classical metaphysics is not restricted to its doctrine of God. While it is true that from this perspective all finite beings involve relations, these relations do not enter into the essential constitution of these beings. The nature or essence of things is intrinsically constituted by substantial principles which determine them to be what they are. Individual substances, of course, have and can enter into relations but these relations are accidental or extrinsic to the essence of these beings. The task of philosophy and science, from such a viewpoint, is to discover and classify beings in terms of their inner essences. Theoretically, at least, such an undertaking can ignore the relations of beings.

The world view which dominated Western thought until the nineteenth century³² and which still dominates "common sense" is a world composed of independent beings which are *also* related. There were, of course, a number of variations on this fundamentally non-relational metaphysics—the two principle ones being atomism and substantialism—but whether the world was conceived of as constituted by unchangeable atoms

or individual substances, the underlying assumption was that they were beings who *possessed* relations rather than beings-in-relation.

We might say that a metaphysics of relations describes the ultimate constitution of reality as relations. This manner of expressing the matter, however, can be most misleading since it tends to transform relations into things. Thus, one might get the impression that instead of atoms or substances the world is composed of basic entities called "relations." One of the main purposes of a pragmatic metaphysics of relations, however, is to avoid the pitfall of classical metaphysics which insists on resolving reality into ultimate elements—whether atoms, substances or principles—each with an inner construction that remains essentially untouched by its relations. The stress upon relations surrenders their quest for any "underlying" reality whether in the form of atoms, essential principles or substantial forms. An aspect of such a metaphysics can be said to be phenomenological inasmuch as it attempts to describe the various realities encountered in experience in terms of their interacting activities—their relations.

The world affirmed by pragmatism, then, is best described not in terms of a collection of independent substances, but in terms of relations. This emphasizes the radical interdependence of entities as they exist concretely in the world and rejects the notion of a closed system composed of things which are complete-in-themselves. In order to explicate a bit more fully what is involved in this relational and processive world, let me turn to a consideration of the meaning and role of experience within pragmatism.

Experience as Processive and Relational

In the history of philosophy, no term, with the possible exception of reason, is more elusive, many-sided, multi-meaning and commonplace than "experience." No brief treat-

ment of experience can avoid elements of confusion and vagueness, yet to try to talk about the world of James and Dewey without attempting to describe the distinctive meaning they give to experience would be like trying to play chess without a board. It must be stressed that there is a "distinctive meaning" of experience in James and Dewey.³³ Unless some effort is made to grasp this meaning, one cannot avoid a gross misunderstanding of every aspect of their respective philosophies. The empiricism of both these men not only separates them from classical rationalism, but, more significantly, sharply distinguishes their thought from classical empiricism (Locke to Mill). The distinct individual contributions of James and Dewey to this novel philosophy of experience need not concern us—suffice it to note that James began this radical transformation of the meaning of experience and Dewey developed and refined it.³⁴

"Life shall be built," James asserts, "in doing and suffering and creating."³⁵ He might as easily have said that "life shall be built in experiencing," for doing, suffering and creating are all modes of experiencing. In the succinct phraseology of Dewey, "experiencing means living."³⁶ For both these thinkers, therefore, experience is best grasped as a process, or more accurately, as a variety of interrelated processes.³⁷ Further, experiencing is not merely passive or receptive. Though Dewey states that "experience is primarily a process of undergoing," he quickly adds, "undergoing, however, is never mere passivity. The most patient patient is more than a receptor. He is also an agent—a reactor, one trying experiments, one concerned with undergoing in a way which may influence what is still to happen." Hence, he concludes, "experience . . . is a matter of *simultaneous* doings and sufferings."³⁸

Experience is not only processive; it is also relational. In so describing experience, James and Dewey break with classical empiricism and oppose idealism (the dominant form of ration-

alism at the time). Dewey contrasts the *new* empiricism with the old in the following passage:

The empirical tradition is committed to particularism. Connections and continuities are supposed to be foreign to experience, to be by-products of dubious validity. An experience that is an undergoing of an environment and a striving for its control in new directions is pregnant with connections.³⁹

Dewey acknowledges that he was but continuing the doctrine of James in his assertion of the reality of relations.⁴⁰ James maintained that his "radical empiricism" was characterized by the recognition that "*the relations that connect experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as 'real' as anything else in the system.*"⁴¹ The polemical thrust of James' position is directed against any idealism which maintained that there must exist some absolute mind to hold together the things of experience. Since, James argued, we experience things as connected just as immediately as we experience the terms of the relations, there is no need to postulate any transempirical metaphysical glue in order to account for whatever unity or unities compose the world.

The significant shift in meaning here is from relation understood as logical or mental to relation grasped as existential, that is, as "*connection, dynamic and functional interaction.*"⁴² Dewey acknowledged the ambiguity which surrounds the word "relation":

In philosophic discourse it is used to designate a connection instituted in thought. It then signifies something indirect, something purely intellectual, even logical. But "relation" in its idiomatic usage denotes something direct and active, something dynamic and energetic. It fixes attention upon the way things bear upon one another, their

clashes and unitings, the way they fulfill and frustrate, promote and retard, excite and inhibit one another.⁴³

In addition to the dual meaning of relation as logical and existential, there is a further ambiguity which is not clearly acknowledged by either James or Dewey but which is most important for my purposes. I would subdivide existential relations into "connective relations" and "constitutive relations." James and Dewey take account of both though they do not employ the second phrase. If we concentrate, however, only on those texts in which they are affirming the reality of relations as connective, we might be led to think that they are guilty of that metaphysical dualism which I have earlier asserted as alien to a metaphysics of relations. Consider, for example, the "statement of fact" which James designates as one of the three distinguishing features of "radical empiricism": "the relations between things, conjunctive as well as disjunctive, are just as much matters of direct particular experience, neither more so nor less so, than the things themselves."⁴⁴ A simplistic reading of this text might lead one to imagine that James is affirming a world made up of "things" and "relations."

A similar interpretation might be attached to Dewey's contention that "in every event there is something obdurate, self-sufficient, wholly immediate, neither a relation nor an element in a relational whole, but terminal and exclusive."⁴⁵ Further substantiation of such an interpretation might be gained both from Dewey's description of individuals and of scientific objects. Dewey contends that the existence of real individuals is a mystery—"the mystery of things being just what they are." He goes on to say that "their occurrence, their manifestation, may be accounted for in terms of other occurrences, but their own quality of existence is final and opaque."⁴⁶

As for "scientific objects," Dewey argues that "science does not concern itself with the individualities of things. It is concerned with their relations." Hence, scientific "laws leave out

of account the inner being of things, and deal only with their relations with other things."⁴⁷ In passages such as these, Dewey is explicitly contrasting "individuals" with "relations" on the basis of the generality of the latter.⁴⁸ The technical complexity of Dewey's doctrine of scientific objects need not engage us. The only point of concern here is whether or not Dewey's position falls prey to a dualism between individual things and relations.

In order to indicate that neither James nor Dewey involve such a dualism, let us take a brief look at James' employment of the "field" metaphor and Dewey's "situationism" or "contextualism." "If," according to James, "one wants to describe the process of experience in its simplest terms with the fewest assumptions, one must suppose":

(1) "Fields" that "develop," under the categories of continuity with each other. . . .

(2) But nothing postulated whose whatness is not of some *nature* given in fields—that is, not of field-stuff, datum-stuff, experience-stuff, content. No pure ego, for example, and no material substance. . . .

(3) All the fields commonly supposed are incomplete, and point to a complement beyond their own content. The final content . . . is that of a plurality of fields, more or less ejective to each other, but still continuous in various ways. . . .⁴⁹

James goes on to say that by the employment of "fields" he has "gained no *stability*. The result is an almost maddening restlessness. . . . But we have gained concreteness."⁵⁰ By viewing things as centers or foci of relational-complexes which overlap and are interdependent, the field metaphor allows us to acknowledge the individuality of things without enclosing their essential reality within some imaginary physical or metaphysical skin. Such an approach is consistent with and faithful to our experience. We never experience any isolated object,

though we can, of course, form an abstraction whereby we separate some feature of the experienced relational-complex from its vital context. There is, needless to say, nothing wrong with such abstracting so long as we recognize that we are doing it for a specific purpose such as increasing our control over a particular situation. The fundamental error, what Whitehead has designated the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness,"⁵¹ is to credit the abstraction or what it supposedly represents as the metaphysically real. For example, no one has ever experienced an isolated tree. What we do experience is a "field" within which we recognize various centers of activities such as trees, houses, dogs, people, continually interacting and interrelating. Now, it is true that for "everyday" purposes we can ignore or abstract from the fact that an individual tree is continuous with the soil in which it is rooted, which soil is continuous with the earth and the atmosphere, which earth is continuous with the solar system, which solar system is continuous with the universe—all in a web of ongoing relationships. Some of these relations are more stable—the most stable of which become expressed in scientific "laws." Other relations are more erratic and unpredictable—floods, storms and the cutting down of the tree in order to build a highway. All of these relations, however, bear upon the reality and existence of the tree, though not all to the same extent and in the same way.

An extremely important implication of pragmatism's field theory of experience is that it undercuts any dualism which would divide reality into "mind stuff" and "matter stuff." This point is explicated (I would not dare say made clear) in James' famous essay "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" where he proposes a functional and relational theory of consciousness in place of a division of man into two ontologically different modes of being—mind and matter.⁵² I will return to this anti-dualism below but for the moment I wish merely to call attention to James' rejection of any "thing"—material, mental or spiritual

—which has an ontological reality “in-itself” with its relations being merely accidental to it.

If anything, Dewey’s “constitutive relationalism” is even more extensive and explicit than that of James. “Nothing exists in isolation anywhere throughout nature,” according to Dewey.⁵³ Such an assertion is, of course, a manifestation of that “Hegelian deposit”⁵⁴ which Dewey never surrendered, however much he might have transformed it. This position is clearly evident in an early essay, “The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology,”⁵⁵ where Dewey rejects the then accepted analysis of human behavior into three discrete moments or events—sensation or stimulus, idea and motor response. In place of the sensistic atomism implied in such an analysis, Dewey substitutes a relationalism which maintains that “stimulus and response are correlative, and the specific function of each is determined in relation to the other. Consequently, just as the stimulus is constitutive of the response, the response is inherent in the stimulus.”⁵⁶

The relationalism expressed in this early essay is made even more explicit in Dewey’s later thought when he comes to substitute the term “transaction” for “interaction.” In most of his works, Dewey described experience in terms of interaction between organism and environment, but in *Knowing and the Known* (written with A. F. Bentley in 1949)⁵⁷ he introduced transaction as a more accurate term than interaction. The point of the shift in terminology is to underline Dewey’s rejection of any dualism which suggests that the organism and its environment⁵⁸ are essentially independent of each other. “An organism does not live *in* an environment,” according to Dewey, “it lives by means of an environment.”⁵⁹ The category of transaction expresses the mutual involvement of organism and environment. As one commentator has expressed it, “Within the various transactional situations, the related aspects are indeed mutual and completely interdependent, as they are in any

'field.'"⁶⁰ Further, the transactional perspective denies the reality of any independent "elements" inasmuch as:

An "element" is a functional unit that gains its specific character from the role that it plays in the transaction. . . . A transaction does not occur with an aggregate or combination of elements that have an independent existence. On the contrary, what counts as an "element" is dependent on its function within a transaction.⁶¹

Dewey most graphically rejects any "elementism" when in discussing the way the organism is *in* nature or the nervous system is *in* the organism, he says that they are "*in*, not as marbles are in a box but as events are in history, in a moving, growing never finished process."⁶²

While Dewey does not employ the term "field" to any great extent, he noted that his use of the term "situations" played much the same role as field in physical theory. In both instances there was an attempt "to find a viable alternative to an atomism which logically involves a denial of connections and to an absolutistic block monism which, in behalf of the reality of relations, leaves no place for the discrete, for plurality, and for individuals."⁶³

"Context" is another term Dewey employs in his effort to illuminate the relational quality of experience. "Experiencing means living," he maintains, "and that living goes on in and because of an enviroing medium, not in a vacuum."⁶⁴ This is simply another way of saying that all experience is contextual, that it takes place *within* a context. It must be stressed that context is relational and pervasive rather than substantive.⁶⁵ So important is context for Dewey that he ventures "to assert that the most pervasive fallacy of philosophic thinking goes back to neglect of context." Philosophers are led to neglect context because as a "background" it does not come into explicit view:

Surrounding, bathing, saturating, the things of which we are explicitly aware is some inclusive situation which does not enter into the direct material of reflection. It does not come into question; it is taken for granted with respect to the particular question that is occupying the field of thinking.⁶⁶

Of particular concern for Dewey is the recognition that all thinking is formed by a cultural context which makes thinking possible but which also limits it. Dewey is aware of the difficulty—one might even say the impossibility—of consciously attending to one's own immediate cultural context. He admits that this context cannot be made a complete object of reflection but the thinker can

realize the existence of such a context, and in doing so he would learn humility and would be debarred from a too unlimited and dogmatic universalization of his conclusions. He would not freeze the quotidian truths relevant to the problems that emerge in his own background of culture into eternal truths inherent in the very nature of things.⁶⁷

To say that all experience is contextual, however, is not to transform it into an amorphous blob without interior differentiation, unity and individuality. "A context or situation is neither a collection of isolated elements, nor a resting place in the march to the Absolute. It has its own unity and individuality, though at the same time it shades off and is continuous with other experiences."⁶⁸ It would be foolish, of course, to suggest that pragmatism has completely resolved all the questions surrounding individuality, in particular the individuality of the human person. This question must be considered a bit more fully in a later chapter.⁶⁹ It will suffice at this point simply to call attention to the fact that though Dewey considered the inner nature of real individuals a mystery, he was unyielding in his contention that they do not exist in isolation, that is, without relations or context. Hence he rejected both the atom-

istic individualism of traditional empiricism and the substantial souls of various forms of "spiritualistic" philosophy.⁷⁰ Very early in his development Dewey explicitly rejected any "independently existing soul" inasmuch as it restricts and degrades individuality, making of it "a separate thing outside of the full flow of things. . . ." He goes on to describe selfhood or individuality ". . . as the unity of reference and function involved in all things when fully experienced—the pivot about which they turn."⁷¹ This statement is an early expression of Dewey's contextualism in which we encounter an individuality that can be properly described, I believe, as the *focus* of a field or relational-complex.

If one were to succinctly describe this world which is presupposed by pragmatism, we might say that it is an ongoing relational-continuum or "field" embodying and bringing forth a plurality of sub-fields each with a unique focus but dependent upon and shading off into other fields. So stated, of course, we have but a bare abstraction.⁷² This abstraction can be concretized, filled out and given specific meaning only as an attempt is made to describe its implications for religious truth, morality, God and religion. Before proceeding to this task, however, a brief indication must be given of how subjective and objective are to be understood and the role of knowledge and faith within this progressive-relational world.

Subject and Object as Derivative

One of the most crucial corollaries of the progressive-relational world view which we have been considering is the denial of the division of reality or experience into subjective and objective. The effort to overcome this metaphysical dualism—which has taken a variety of forms in twentieth-century thought—is one of the most important tasks confronting anyone who is desirous of reconstructing religion.⁷³ It is most difficult to describe clearly and unequivocally what pragmatism means by the

derivative nature of the subject-object, subjective-objective distinction. As a minimum, however, we can grasp the reason for the difficulty. The following reason might be suggested: since our language and thought patterns are structured in terms of the subject-object distinction, any effort to speak of or understand reality as other than ontologically divided into subjective and objective realities is at a decided disadvantage. If one tries to overcome the difficulty by creating a new terminology, then he runs the risk of unintelligibility and pseudomysticism. This would seem to be the pathway of Heidegger and Whitehead. If, on the other hand, one chooses to retain ordinary language and bend, twist and expand it to convey the new insight, he runs the risk of having his insights absorbed into the commonplace and thereby grossly distorted. This would seem to have been the fate of James and Dewey.

Alerted to the difficulty involved, let us now turn to the subject-object distinction in James and Dewey. Experience, James asserts, is a "double-barrelled" term,⁷⁴ and commenting on this Dewey states:

It is "double-barrelled" in that it recognizes in its primary integrity no division between act and material, subject and object, but contains them both in an unanalyzed totality. "Thing" and "thought," as James says in the same connection, are single-barrelled; they refer to products discriminated by reflection out of primary experience.⁷⁵

Thus, as Randall points out, ". . . the 'subject-object distinction' . . . is a practical distinction that arises *in process*, *in the thinking situation*."⁷⁶ Now, it is important to underline the fact that there is no question here of denying the reality of the distinction between subject and object, subjective and objective. Rather what is being attempted is a *reconstruction* in which they are more adequately described as different functions of reality instead of two different *kinds* of reality.⁷⁷ To restrict experience to the subject,⁷⁸ as has been done traditionally,

leads to a host of insoluble problems which have plagued modern philosophy—such as bridging the gap between the mind and reality, distinguishing the real from the apparent and the like. Experience then is neither subjective nor objective in its primordial concreteness. The distinction takes place within experience and is functional. Hence, as James argues:

The attributes "subject" and "object," "represented" and "representative," "thing" and "thought" mean, then, a practical distinction of the utmost importance, but a distinction which is of a FUNCTIONAL order only, and not at all ontological as understood by classical dualism.⁷⁹

A distinct advantage of pragmatism's approach to the subject-object question is that it accounts for a real difference while avoiding many destructive or, at best, distracting consequences which characterize the various expressions of philosophical dualism. One avoids the idle and elusive pursuit of the "really real" or "being as such" or the "thing-in-itself," as well as the tendency either to transform all reality into mind, or downgrade subjectivity to an apparent, or at best inferior, mode of reality. Perhaps the most important implication of this functional use of subjective and objective is that meaning and values can be affirmed as objective without assuming that they exist as such in some immutable world apart from the context within which they function. If, as Dewey suggested,⁸⁰ we could substitute the terms *effective* or *directive* for *objective*, and *futile* or *misleading* for *subjective*, then the crucial and indispensable insight and demand of classical thought—the need to avoid a whimsical and destructive individualism—would be retained without the accompanying liabilities.

It should be evident that the basic argument advanced in favor of considering subject and object, subjective and objective as functionally rather than ontologically distinct is a pragmatic argument. Of course, "processive-relationalism," as with any other philosophical perspective, must not involve gross con-

traditions and must have a certain degree of conceptual consistency. The reasons for selecting this approach, however, must be sought elsewhere. As already indicated, the functional approach gives rise to possibilities not found in the ontological approach and avoids unfruitful problems with which traditional philosophy inevitably becomes engrossed. By maintaining that the subject and object belong to different ontological orders, one is thereby led to spend energy looking for the intrinsic or essential principles of each. This manner of thinking then creates the overarching problem of how these two orders relate to each other. This general problem, in turn, gives rise to a number of specific problems such as: How can mind know matter? How can it be determined whether ideas correspond with reality? Is art subjective or objective? Are there absolute and objective values which exist independently of the individual person or culture? What, if any, relation can there be between the subjectivity of faith and religion and the objective world of science?

Another formidable liability of making subjects and objects inhabitants of ontologically different worlds, is the emergence of various forms of subjectivism and objectivism. It is no longer sufficient to acknowledge that both subjectivistic and objectivistic philosophies have valid though incomplete insights. We can no longer rest content with choosing the subject or the object, the approach of subjectivity or objectivity; we must choose both because neither has any reality apart from the other and thinking that they do gives rise to the twin monsters of subjectivism and objectivism. Dewey was particularly perceptive concerning the tendency of these two opposing doctrines to breed and feed upon each other.

This resort to an objectivism which ignores initiating and re-organizing desire and imagination will in the end only strengthen that other phase of subjectivism which consists in escape to the enjoyment of inward landscape. Men who are balked of a legitimate realization of their subjectivity,

men who are forced to confine innovating need and projection of ideas to technical modes of industrial and political life, and to specialized or "scientific" fields of intellectual activity, will compensate by finding release within their inner consciousness. . . . Consequences within philosophy as such are of no great import. But philosophical dualism is but a formulated recognition of an impasse in life; an impotence in interaction, inability to make effective transition, limitation of power to regulate and thereby to understand.⁸¹

As long, then, as we persist in thinking of subject and object in some form of ontological dualism, we will be confronted with doctrines which affirm man at the expense of the world or the world at the expense of man; which make of human subjectivity a precious mode of experience or reality, only incidentally located in the world of nature; or which consider man and his values a kind of afterthought tacked onto the *real* world, which has its structures and laws radically independent of human desires, hopes and beliefs.

When subject and object, subjective and objective are thought of as functionally distinct, the consequences are quite different. The distinction is justified and indeed necessitated because it enables us to exercise greater control over our activities, thereby leading to an enrichment of human life. The most crucial consequence of this approach is that the door is left open for continual change in both subject and object, thereby directing human energy and creativity toward transforming inadequate situations (which situations are *constituted* by subjective and objective relations)⁸² into more adequate ones. Such a transformation is quite consistent with the view of a developing and relational world but is antithetical to a view which presupposes that both man and the world are permanently and finally structured by means of essential principles—whether those principles be designated spiritual or material. This latter assumption leads man to expend his energy trying to discover and mirror in his ideas such principles in some once-and-for-all

conceptual system. Hence, instead of evaluating one's concepts in terms of their fruitfulness in the realm of human living, they are valued for their abstract consistency and alleged correspondence with the "external" world or with "objective reality."

Knowledge as Experiential and Participational

As one might suspect, the functionalism which characterizes pragmatism is greatly in evidence in the way in which knowing is described. Though often misunderstood as a form of irrationalism or as anti-intellectual, pragmatism assigns a central and indispensable role to knowing. Since, however, pragmatism is primarily life-oriented rather than knowledge-oriented, knowledge, or better knowing, is for the sake of life and not the other way around. Both James and Dewey affirm a philosophy of experience in which experience includes but is wider than knowledge. "Knowing," James tells us, "may . . . be *only one way of getting into fruitful relations with reality*."⁸³

Dewey, who develops this point at great length throughout his works, states: "Knowledge . . . does not encompass the world as a whole," and for that reason ". . . we do not have to go to knowledge to obtain an exclusive hold on reality."⁸⁴ To assert that knowledge alone gives us access to reality is to be guilty of "vicious intellectualism" and to commit the "intellectualistic fallacy."⁸⁵ Since things are *had* before they are known,⁸⁶ it is crucial to distinguish "having" from "knowing" experiences. The former is direct, ranging from enjoying a cup of coffee to appreciating a symphony or undergoing a mystical experience. Knowledge is a particular mode of experience.⁸⁷ It arises out of a problematic situation and is a direct and controlled effort to render this situation more satisfactory. There is no intent on Dewey's part of diminishing the importance and indispensability of knowledge. Knowledge is the "sole mode of control of nature" that man has, and this is why, according to Dewey, European philosophy has been systematically hyp-

notized ". . . since the time of Socrates into thinking that all experiencing is a mode of knowing, if not good knowledge, then a low-grade or confused or implicit knowledge."⁸⁸

In refusing to identify knowledge and experience, Dewey is by no means separating them. As already noted, knowledge is actually a mode of experience, a distinctive kind of transaction. The tendency of both classical empiricism and classical rationalism to render experience and reason radically different and antithetical is explicitly rejected.⁸⁹ Hence, it can be asserted that "experience is not opaque to reason, it can become funded with intelligence."⁹⁰ This means that experience, or better, experiencing, can grow in such a way as to manifest increased order, rationality and intelligence. When we speak of learning from experience, then, we are not suggesting an alternative to learning through reason.

Much confusion and many artificial problems could be avoided if we expressed the traditional difference between experience and reason in terms of "two kinds of experience: one which is occupied with uncontrolled change and one concerned with directed and regulated change."⁹¹ Dewey here is taking cognizance of the *experimental* characteristic of science which has developed during the modern era. In asserting that the most reliable knowledge man has is that acquired by scientific method, no positivistic reductionism or superficial scientism is implied. Even Dewey, who might seem to be most guilty in this respect, explicitly asserts that the meaning of the emphasis which he has "placed upon scientific method has little to do with specialized techniques."⁹² Randall has argued that Dewey's experimentalism is not primarily based on the methods of the laboratory but is more akin to the experimentalism of practical common sense and the experimentalism of the anthropologist.⁹³ It is proper, I believe, to state that Dewey had an analogical rather than univocal understanding of scientific method. "Science," he tells us, "is not constituted by any particular body of subject-matter. It is constituted by a method, a method of

changing beliefs by means of tested inquiry as well as of arriving at them."⁹⁴

It is this experimental method or approach which is so important for my purposes. Ultimately it is a method which is for the sake of life, by which is meant that its purpose is to transform man and the world in such a way that a better quality of life will be possible. It is only such a method which is consonant with the processive-relational world which I am attempting to describe. The change which this method brings about, it must be noted, is not merely a change in mind or consciousness or the human subject. If reality were complete or finished, this would be the only kind of change possible,⁹⁵ but on the hypothesis herein advanced, reality is not finished. Hence the importance of an experimental method⁹⁶ which enables us to substitute directed and controlled activity and change for that which is undirected and uncontrolled.

Knowledge, then, or more accurately, knowing, is a distinct but not exclusive way of contributing to and participating in the processive world. While there may be a representative and correspondence aspect to knowledge, these are in the service of an activity which enables man to change himself and the world. "I, for my part," James asserts, "cannot escape the consideration, forced upon me at every turn, that the knower is not simply a mirror floating with no foot-hold anywhere, and passively reflecting an order that he comes upon and finds simply existing. The knower is an actor, and coefficient of the truth which he helps to create."⁹⁷ Dewey, of course, is noted for his critique of all "spectator" theories of knowledge which assign man the role of discovering and mentally representing the antecedent structure of reality, that is, reality as it is in itself independent of the human knower.

Faith as Experiential and Participational

Is there any role for belief or faith in the processive-relational world which accords scientific method such an important place?

I would venture to say that there is no world view, including that which was formed in the Middle Ages, in which belief plays a more central and decisive role. Dewey approvingly cites Emerson to the effect that the natural attitude of man is believing.⁹⁸ In his own words he asserts that "'reality' naturally instigates belief," and he goes on to say that "... beliefs are the most natural, and in that sense, the most metaphysical of all things. . . ."⁹⁹ It was Peirce, of course, who first stressed the organic and indispensable role of belief in knowledge and who related it inseparably to action. It was James, on the other hand, who seemed to give an exaggerated role to belief. Perhaps nothing that James wrote created more stir and brought more intemperate criticism than his famous essay "The Will to Believe." Even allowing for a certain imprecision of language, and for the fact that the essay is better entitled "The Right to Believe,"¹⁰⁰ it is hard to see how critics could have so completely missed the authenticity of the main thrust of this work. James simply notes a few things which are now commonplaces—for example, that we are continually confronted by problematic situations which call for decisions but for which definitive evidence is lacking. To insist that we decide or act only when we possess intellectually compelling evidence which removes all or even most doubt is tantamount to rendering us inactive in most of the crucial areas of our life. Further, as Perry so well shows, to affirm that "scientific evidence" should be the final arbiter of our decisions is itself to make an act of faith.¹⁰¹

In noting the limitations of knowledge and the legitimacy, even necessity of beliefs, James and Dewey are not condoning wild, indiscriminate believing. Dewey is most explicit: "Any one of our beliefs is subject to criticism, revision, and even ultimate elimination through the development of its own implications by intelligently directed action."¹⁰² In very simple language, pragmatism insists that beliefs, including any which might be called religious, make their way or justify themselves

on the basis of their consequences—in terms of the quality of life to which they give rise. The controlling principle of pragmatism might be said to be: “By their fruits you shall know them.”

One further point: belief or faith is not merely a stopgap for ignorance, a resting place for the human subject until such time as reason catches up. Faith is actually an operative principle in the very making of man and the world. Along with knowledge, art and other experiences, faith is a way of participating or sharing in the creating of man and the world. Again, in a static or finished reality, faith could have no other role but to anticipate the correspondence of mind to reality. But in a world in the making, the very kind of world that it will be depends at least in part upon the beliefs involved in the making of it.

Another way of expressing the creative features of knowledge and faith is to say that for pragmatism, experience is future-oriented. “The worth and interest of the world,” James maintains, “consists not in its elements, be these elements things, or be they the conjunctions of things; it exists rather in the dramatic outcome in the whole process, and in the meaning of the succession stages which the elements work out.”¹⁰³

While experience for Dewey, as we have already seen, is always relative to a context, it is not a context which is enclosed or shut off; this is why he can assert that experience is open to the future, “characterized by projection, by reaching forward into the unknown.”¹⁰⁴ The centrality of the category of growth in Dewey’s philosophy of education, for example, manifests the importance of the future. Good education depends upon the ability of the educator to anticipate which experiences will enable the student to grow in such a way that he will be open to further experiences rather than cut off from future possibilities.¹⁰⁵

In stressing the importance of the future for Dewey, two misunderstandings must be avoided. First, there is no question

of ransoming the present for the future. He explicitly states: "The ideal of using the present simply to get ready for the future contradicts itself."¹⁰⁶ Further, in the mature stage of his thought, Dewey went to great pains to assert that while experiences are never final and hence are always instrumental, they can also be and often are consummatory, that is, relatively complete and fulfilling.¹⁰⁷ He even went so far as to define art as any activity which is simultaneously both instrumental and consummatory.¹⁰⁸

The other misunderstanding of Dewey's concern for the future which must be avoided is that the past is of little or no value.¹⁰⁹ Experience, he tells us, "can expand into the future only as it is enlarged to take in the past."¹¹⁰ Since "no experience lives and dies to itself," and "every experience lives on in further experiences,"¹¹¹ there can be no question of denying the continuity of experience. "The principle of continuity of experience," according to Dewey, "means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after."¹¹²

Some Closing Observations

By acknowledging a variety of experiences with distinct and indispensable functions in human life, pragmatism points the way toward overcoming a destructive rationalism or intellectualism without falling prey to a superficial anti-intellectualism or emotionalism. There is no need, for example, to prove that art and religion are modes of knowledge in order to assure that they are taken seriously inasmuch as knowledge is not the exclusive or privileged pathway to reality. Most important for my purposes, it is possible to defend a philosophy of faith which denies that faith is a form of knowledge but which does not thereby deny its importance and indispensability.¹¹³ Further, the experimental functionalism which distinguishes

pragmatism suggests a third alternative between positing ontologically separate or distinct orders such as the religious, the scientific and the artistic or collapsing all experiences into an indistinguishable and undifferentiated mass. Within the processive-relational world of pragmatism, we are able to recognize and respect the distinctness of a variety of human experiences (fields) while acknowledging that they interpenetrate and shade into each other. In accordance with such a view, it is defensible to speak of religion, art, science and the like, since by a deliberate and temporary restriction of reflective concern and consideration one enters, or better re-enters, more deeply into the ongoing relational-continuum called reality. The key, as James and Dewey never failed to emphasize, is that our theoretical meanderings, if they are successful, eventually return us to a deeper experience in our everyday life.

I would like to underline the fact that I am making no claim here, nor will I do so in subsequent chapters, that pragmatism has definitively resolved the problems with which this essay is concerned. I am strongly suggesting, however, that the problems with which we are concerned are radically transformed when viewed in terms of process and relations instead of in terms of enclosed and essentially finished substantial things. I would further assert that the processive-relational world which will be presupposed throughout is non-reductionist; it escapes any "nothing but" interpretation of nature or reality. Randall expresses this when he refers to ". . . a comprehensive nature with room for everything experience discloses, from electrons to God. . . ." ¹¹⁴ In the same vein, Dewey proclaims that "things loved, admired and revered, things that spiritualistic philosophies have seized upon as the defining characters of ultimate Being, are genuine elements of nature." ¹¹⁵ Pragmatism suggests a world, therefore, rich in possibilities, which continually resists intellectualistic efforts, whether in the direction of materialism or rationalism, to reduce it to a particular kind of reality.

NOTES

1. I am deliberately using "category" and "metaphor" interchangeably. As I am employing these terms neither has the restricted technical meaning accorded them in philosophy and literature respectively. Yet I wish them to retain something of the flavor of both. Hence, I will understand category or metaphor as a notion in relation to which a large body of data is grasped, organized, illuminated and developed. Such terms are functional and participational rather than representative; that is, they are means by which we share in the ongoing processes of reality rather than abstractly represent them.

2. Cf. Amelie Rorty, ed., *Pragmatic Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday & Co., Anchor Books, 1966), p. v. "Pragmatism, like most philosophic 'isms,' is best thought of as a label for a range of views bearing a general family resemblance." Rorty's work is an excellent collection of texts from the writings of Peirce, James and Dewey, followed by a number of essays illustrating the nature of the criticism of pragmatism as well as some of the more technical philosophical offshoots or developments of it.

3. John Dewey, *Characters and Events*, Joseph Ratner, ed. (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1929), Vol. II, p. 440.

4. To avoid giving the impression that there is some "reality as such" which undergirds the world, I am using "world" and "reality" interchangeably. Actually there are many worlds, all of them real in the Jamesian or Deweyan sense. "Anything is real," James tells us, "of which we find ourselves obliged to take account in any way" (*Writings*, pp. 253-254). See also, John Dewey, *On Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, edited and introduced by Richard J. Bernstein (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1960), p. 59, where Dewey says that "reality" is "a denotative term, a word used to designate indifferently everything that happens." John Herman Randall, Jr., puts the issue as follows: "Everything encountered in any way is somehow real. The significant question is, not whether anything is 'real' or not, but how and in what sense it is real, and how it is related to and functions among other reals" *Nature and Historical Experience*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 131.

5. Cited by Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James* (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1935), Vol. II, p. 656.

6. Gardner Murphy, *Human Potentialities* (New York: Basic Books, 1958), p. 326.

7. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Future of Man* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 71.

8. Karl Rahner, "Experiment: Man," *Theology Digest* (February, 1968),

pp. 58, 60-61. In this remarkable essay, Rahner places great stress upon the changeability of man. "Nature," he states, "cannot simply be taken for granted as something given and fixed" (p. 63). Nevertheless, a few paragraphs later he also says, "In many cases, what we described as 'nature' was only some relatively fixed condition which was actually a changeable element within the *permanent essence*" (p. 63, italics added). Such a passage, in my opinion, is evidence of the immense difficulty involved in overcoming the classical mind-set, for despite Rahner's awareness of the radically developmental aspect of man, he still retains a metaphysical dualism between "changeable elements" and "the permanent essence."

9. See Ralph Henry Gabriel, *The Course of American Democratic Thought* (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1940), pp. 331-332; also, Josiah Royce, *Race Questions, Provincialism and Other American Problems* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1908), pp. 160, 162.

10. James, *Writings*, introduction, p. xxxiii.

11. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 47.

12. James, *Writings*, p. 432.

13. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 51.

14. James, *Writings*, p. 331.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 456.

16. John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty* (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1929), p. 210.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 215.

18. Robert Johann, S.J., "Philosopher's Notebook," *America* (February 27, 1965), p. 287.

19. Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 100.

20. Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York: Meridian, 1960), p. 104.

21. Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1958), p. 191.

22. Lewin's work is extremely difficult and technical from the point of view of a layman in psychology. Two collections of his papers, however, give a good indication of what he is about: *A Dynamic Theory of Personality*, trans. by Donald K. Adams and Karl E. Zener (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1935), and *Field Theory in Social Science*, Dorwin Cartwright, ed. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1951). For a relatively short and reasonably readable introduction to Lewin's theory, see "Lewin's Field Theory," in *Theories of Personality*, by Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1957), pp. 206-256.

23. Murphy, *Human Potentialities*, p. 21.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 303, 307.

25. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Doubleday & Co., Anchor Book Edition, 1967), p. 189.

26. For a development of these two categories, see Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), Part One, Division One, Chapters II and IV.

27. For an illuminating exposition of this theme in Marcel's thought, see Kenneth T. Gallagher, *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), Chapter II, "Being In A Situation."

28. Quoted in *The National Catholic Reporter*, April 13, 1966, p. 2.

29. For a description of such a metaphysics as manifested in the realm of art, see John J. McDermott, "To Be Human Is to Humanize," in *American Philosophy and the Future*, Michael Novak, ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), pp. 21-59.

30. Cf. Magda King, *Heidegger's Philosophy* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1964), p. 16. "No matter how variously traditional ontology may define the substance, it always does so with a view to self-subsistence, self-maintenance without recourse to other beings, unchanging presence as an independent self. And just because independence and self-subsistence are the basic characters of substantial being, its perfect embodiment must be self-produced, or unproduced, uncaused, uncreated."

31. Cf. *The Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Anton C. Pegis, ed. (New York: Random House, 1945), Vol. I, p. 283. "As the creature proceeds from God in diversity of nature, God is outside the order of the whole creation, nor does any relation to the creature arise from His nature; for He does not produce the creature by necessity of His nature, but by His intellect and will. . . . Therefore, there is no real relation in God to the creature, whereas in creatures there is a real relation to God; because creatures are contained under the divine order, and their very nature entails dependence on God." This is not to deny that there was a significant anticipation or foreshadowing of a metaphysics of relations in Aquinas and other medieval thinkers; texts concerning the trinity remain a rich resource for such a metaphysics. What must be avoided is either denying any awareness of the reality and importance of relations before modern times or ascribing too much to earlier relationalist insights. It might be suggested that by a process of retrospective development we are now able to deepen medieval trinitarianism. By this I mean that because of the heightened awareness of relations which has lately emerged we are now able to achieve a richer appreciation of the doctrine of the trinity than was possessed by even the greatest of the early Christian thinkers.

32. It was with the advent of nineteenth-century idealism that relations moved to the center of metaphysical thought. Pragmatism was both a reaction to idealistic relationalism and a development of it. The complicated history of the relation between idealism and pragmatism cannot be entered into here. I would simply suggest that when James and Dewey are affirming those relations which are designated "connective" they are opposing idealism; when they affirm those relations which I shall call "constitutive" they are continuing and developing the idealistic insight. For fuller consideration of this point, see pp. 54 ff.

33. Dewey concisely describes this distinctive meaning in "The Need for Recovery of Philosophy," in *Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, p. 23. For a critical exposition of Dewey's "metaphysics of experience," see John E. Smith, "John Dewey: Philosopher of Experience," *The Review of Metaphysics* (September, 1959), pp. 60-78. For a response to Smith, see Richard J. Bernstein, "Dewey's Naturalism," *The Review of Metaphysics* (December, 1959), pp. 340-353.

34. This transformation was by no means indirect or unconscious, for James explicitly designates his metaphysics *radical empiricism* in an effort to differentiate it from other forms of empiricism. Dewey was so concerned to emphasize the distinctive features of his empiricism, that he wondered

in his later years whether or not employing the term "experience" had not been a mistake since so much effort had to be expended clarifying and distinguishing experience as employed by him from the more traditional meaning of "experience" in Western philosophy.

35. William James, *Letters of William James*, James, ed. (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1920), Vol. I, p. 148.

36. Dewey, *Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, p. 24.

37. Cf. H. S. Thayer, *Meaning and Action*, p. 451. In discussing pragmatism's overhauling of the concept of experience, Thayer states: "The result was that instead of experience being the stuff from which ideas are derived, it became a way in which ideas have a function and their significance is elicited. *Experience thus interpreted is a process rather than substance*" (italics added).

38. Dewey, *Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, pp. 25-26.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

40. *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 533, n. 16.

41. James, *Writings*, p. 195.

42. Dewey, *Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, p. 29, n. 2.

43. John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Capricorn Books 1958), p. 134.

44. William James, *The Meaning of Truth*, (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909), p. xii.

45. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 85.

46. Dewey, *Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, pp. 240-241.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 283. See also *Experience and Nature*, p. xii.

48. Cf. *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 537, n. 19, where Dewey states that "individual is here contrasted with relational as general."

49. Cited by Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, Vol. II, p. 365.

50. *Ibid.*

51. Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1929), p. 11. Also, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929), pp. 52, 59.

52. James, *Writings*, pp. 169-183. In particular, p. 178: "Consciousness connotes a kind of external relation, and does not denote a special stuff or way of being. *The peculiarity of our experiences, that they not only are, but are known, which their 'conscious' quality is invoked to explain, is better explained by their relations—these relations themselves being experiences—to one another.*"

53. John Dewey, *Freedom and Culture* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1963), p. 159.

54. For the details of Dewey's "Hegelian deposit," cf. Morton G. White, *The Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943).

55. John Dewey, "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology," *Psychological Review* (July, 1896), pp. 357-370.

56. Richard J. Bernstein, *John Dewey* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), p. 17.

57. John Dewey and A. F. Bentley, *Knowing and the Known* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949).

58. Dewey does not employ "environment" in its usual sense. Cf. *Experience and Education* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1956), pp. 41-42. Dewey here asserts that the "environment" which enters into an experience may variously be constituted by persons, topics being discussed, toys, books, the materials of an experiment or even a "castle in the air." In short, "the environment . . . is whatever conditions interact with personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create the experience which is had."

59. John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1938), p. 25.

60. George R. Geiger, *John Dewey in Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 17. See also Bernstein, Introduction to *Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, p. xl: ". . . in a transaction, the components themselves are subject to change."

61. Bernstein, *John Dewey*, p. 83.

62. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 295.

63. *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 544.

64. Dewey, *Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, p. 24.

65. John J. McDermott, in discussing change in religious doctrine, has expressed this point exceptionally well: "A context is no separate thing or container in which doctrinal persuasions play themselves out; rather, it is of the very structure of the doctrine itself and in changing such context, there is generated a like change in doctrinal meaning, although the mode of expression often hangs on." *The American Angle of Vision* (New York: Cross Currents, 1966), p. 79. First published in *Cross Currents* (Winter, 1965).

66. Dewey, *Experience, Nature and Freedom*, pp. 92, 99.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

68. Bernstein, "Dewey's Naturalism," p. 341.

69. See below, pp. 127 ff.

70. *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, pp. 555-556.

71. John Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), p. 268, n.

72. James, following Bergson was particularly aware of the impossibility of conveying in words and concepts the fabric of experience. Cf. *Writings*, p. 297. "I am tiring myself and you, I know, by vainly seeking to describe by concepts and words what I say at the same time exceeds either conceptualization or verbalization. As long as one continues *talking*, intellectualism remains in undisturbed possession of the field. The return to life can't come about by talking. It is an *act*; to make you return to life. I must set an example for your imitation, I must deafen you to talk, or to the importance of talk, by showing you, as Bergson does, that the concepts we talk with are made for purposes of *practice* and not for purposes of insight. Or I must *point*, point to the mere *that* of life, and you by inner sympathy must fill out the *what* for yourselves."

73. Cf. Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 25. "It is the function of an ontological concept to use some realm of experience to point to characteristics of being-itself which lie above the split between subjectivity and objectivity and which therefore cannot be expressed literally in terms taken from the subjective or the objective side."

74. James, *Writings*, p. 172.
75. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 8.
76. John Herman Randall, Jr., *Nature and Historical Experience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 223.
77. Cf. McDermott. "To Be Human Is to Humanize," p. 32. "The subject-object duality is no longer to the point, for at both ends these terms are but abstract statements of actually dynamic processes."
78. Cf. Dewey, *Experience and Education*, pp. 33-34. "Experience does not go on simply inside a person. . . . Every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had."
79. James, *Writings*, p. 194.
80. *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 541, n. 26.
81. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, pp. 241-242.
82. Cf. Bernstein, *John Dewey*, p. 94. "A situation cuts across the dualism of subject and object, mental and physical. These distinctions are instituted within an inclusive context or situation."
83. James, *The Meaning of Truth*, pp. 80-81.
84. Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, pp. 295-296.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 219.
86. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 21.
87. For a clear exposition of Dewey's position on knowledge and experience, see Geiger, *John Dewey in Perspective*, Chap. 4, "Inquiry, Knowing, and Truth." One point should be under-lined—"consciousness" or "awareness" is not, as such, knowledge but rather is "the background of knowledge." "Knowledge, being a process, or, more accurately, the result of a process, cannot be immediate" (*ibid.*, p. 62).
88. Dewey, *Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, p. 54.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
90. Bernstein, "Dewey's Naturalism," p. 341.
91. Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 83.
92. Dewey, *Experience and Education*, p. 111.
93. *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 82.
94. Dewey, *A Common Faith*, pp. 38-39. See also *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 220. For an illuminating description of this aspect of pragmatism, cf. R. W. Sleeper, "Pragmatism, Religion and 'Experienceable Difference,'" in *American Philosophy and the Future*, Michael Novak, ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), pp. 270-323. Sleeper chooses the phrase, "Experienceable Difference," to express "pragmatism's contention that the best way of testing any claim is to apply it to experience, to measure it against the facts, to bring it to bear upon reality by adopting it in practice. . . . It is the view that experienced reality corrects and transforms our claims and assertions—or grounds and confirms them" (p. 272).
95. Cf. Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy*, p. 185. "If 'reality' is already and completely given, and if knowledge is just submissive acceptance, then, of course, inquiry is only a subjective change in the human 'mind' or in 'consciousness,'—these being subjective and 'unreal.'"
96. The terms "experimental" and "experiment" are not applicable only to knowledge. If "life" rather than "knowledge" is the *primary* locus of experiment, then we might fruitfully exercise it in various spheres of ex-

perience. In so doing, of course, the distinctive qualities of these experiences would have to be respected. For more on this, see below, pp. 169 ff.

97. William James, *Collected Essays and Reviews*, Ralph Barton Perry, ed. (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1920), p. 67.

98. Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy*, p. 196.

99. *Ibid.*, pp. 171, 195.

100. Ralph Barton Perry, *In the Spirit of William James* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), p. 170. For a fresh and insightful reconsideration of the central problem of James' essay, see Walter Arnold, "Is There an Ethics of Belief?" *Cross Currents* (Summer, 1967), pp. 333-342.

101. Perry, *In the Spirit of William James*, pp. 178, 179, 189.

102. Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy*, p. 194; also, p. 167.

103. James, *Writings*, p. 290.

104. Dewey, *Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, p. 23. Also *ibid.*, p. 27: "Since we live forward; since we live in a world where changes are going on whose issue means our weal or woe; since every act of ours modifies these changes and hence is fraught with promise, or charged with hostile energies—what should experience be but a future implicated in a present!"

105. Dewey, *Experience and Education*, pp. 13, 28-29.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 51. See also Bernstein, "Dewey's Naturalism," p. 343.

107. Cf. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, pp. 120, 183; also, *The Quest For Certainty*, p. 236.

108. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 361.

109. For an indication of the importance of "tradition" for Dewey, see John Herman Randall, Jr., "Dewey's Interpretation of the History of Philosophy," in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, pp. 77-102.

110. Dewey, *Experience and Education*, p. 93.

111. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

112. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

113. See pp. 81 ff.

114. Randall, *Nature and Historical Experience*, p. 14. See also p. 201: "... 'Nature' must find some secure place in her domain for 'the Ideal,' 'the Transcendent,' and even for 'the Supernatural.'"

115. Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 303.

CHAPTER II

RELIGIOUS TRUTH: A PRAGMATIC RECONSTRUCTION

My task in this chapter and the chapters which follow is most properly described as the initiation of a *probe* in the direction of a radical reconstruction of religious truth, morality, God and religion. I am concerned simply to delineate the conditions for a viable theory, or, to use a less ambitious term, a viable *approach* to these realities, given a thoroughly processive view of man and reality. In each of these areas, there are classical controversies and highly technical questions which must be bracketed or merely referred to in passing. I will not presume to resolve, for example, the classical conflicts surrounding the "proofs" for the existence of God or the reality of moral "absolutes." Though I make no pretense of solving these problems I will in each instance take a position and give some indication as to why I think such a position is justified, or, as a minimum, what are some of the positive possibilities to which such a position gives rise. The justification for this non-polemical approach is that reflective men must continue to think and act in spite of the absence of definitive resolutions to many profoundly complex problems. There is no avoiding taking sides on these great issues but this does not mean that there is no merit in the position which one rejects. A pragmatic

attitude of openness, as I will stress below, allows us to make a commitment, whether intellectual, moral or religious, without closing us off from insights achieved by others who operate from different and even opposed commitments and perspectives.¹

In the Introduction, I expressed my belief that the human situation has a richness which cannot be exhaustively grasped or expressed by one metaphysics. Hence, while the fundamental framework throughout this essay will be supplied by the processive-relational metaphysics which was described in the previous chapter, there will be no hesitation in drawing upon insights developed in other traditions whenever it is judged that they further the question under consideration. If the result is an uneasy amalgam of pragmatism, existentialism and phenomenology, this is not necessarily an eclectic disaster. The primary obligation of any philosophical endeavor is to better a problematic situation, not to maintain some kind of ideological purity or abstract intellectual consistency. Why, then, have I described in such detail a particular metaphysics? Three reasons seem pertinent: first, because particular problems are most fruitfully handled within a relatively integral and consistent metaphysics; secondly, while all philosophical approaches are to some extent eclectic, they also involve a controlling set of principles and a dominant angle of vision; finally, because the metaphysics opted for is congenial to whatever has been assimilated from other traditions.

Faith Not a Mode of Knowledge

Given a processive-relational world, let me try now, most tentatively and hypothetically, to draw out the implications for religious truth. The first condition for a pragmatic reconstruction of religious truth is a willingness to surrender the "knowledge" bias which has for a variety of reasons, many of them quite good ones, dominated Western culture and the Christian re-

ligion from the time of the Greeks. To state my position in its sharpest and starkest form, let me say that religious truth is characterized by faith and faith is *not* knowledge, whether about God or man or the world. Now, such an assertion is for many people, specifically those within the Roman Catholic tradition, quite disconcerting. It immediately conjures up such specters as voluntarism, emotivism and subjectivism. To say that faith is not knowledge would seem at best unnecessarily confusing and misleading and hence there is a great temptation to substitute for it a position which would affirm a variety of modes of knowledge, among which we would have one called "faith." I readily concede that there are a number of impressive efforts to account for much of the data with which I am concerned and to do so without denying that faith is knowledge in some sense.² Nevertheless, I feel that the formulation "Faith is not knowledge" should be retained for at least two reasons. First, and perhaps less important, knowledge, like science, has come, in Western civilization, to have an increasingly precise and restricted meaning. It seems fruitless to insist on using knowledge (or science) to cover a variety of admittedly different experiences simply because classical philosophy used the term first, in a broader but less precise sense.

The second and more important reason is that to make faith a mode of knowledge is like making love and art modes of knowledge; in doing so we risk losing the truly distinctive quality of all these experiences. In the final analysis such an approach betrays as its hidden assumption the belief that only knowledge is of value. The classic example of such an attitude is to insist that sex is a form of knowledge principally on the basis of the Hebrew use of the term "know."

Instead of *knowledge*, I will employ the term *experience* as my primary category or metaphor. I will affirm a variety of modes of experience without ranking them hierarchically.³ This is not to imply that all experiences are of equal value.

The worth of an experience or of a type of experience will be assigned on the basis of its contribution to the development of man. One immediate advantage of such an approach is that it removes any artificial competition among our experiences. A variety of experiences has a claim upon us simply because no one kind of experience suffices for the continuing realization of man.

The contention that faith is essentially noncognitive is so central to my position and gives rise to such controversy that, before proceeding further, I think it would be helpful if I spelled out a bit more fully something of what a doctrine of faith as noncognitive implies. First, it should be noted that in any dispute concerning the relation of faith to knowledge no one seriously asserts their identity and no one seriously asserts their radical separation. In evaluating the competing explanations, therefore, every effort should be made to avoid caricature. Though this essay attempts an explanation of faith which denies that it is essentially cognitive, there is no implied claim that every explanation of faith as cognitive is crudely rationalistic and abstractionist. On the other hand, I do not accept a characterization of the position here offered as fideistic, emotivist or anti-intellectual. In the long run the crucial question is: Which better accounts for that which must be accounted for—an explanation in terms of a variety of knowings or one in terms of a variety of experiences?⁴

Recall the key principle asserted by Dewey to the effect that experience is wider than and inclusive of knowledge. Knowledge is but one among the variety of experiences that may be had by the human person. I contend that faith is also a mode of experience distinct but not separable from knowledge. It is important to stress that I am presupposing a living person as a concrete relational unity. Traditionally all worth-while theories of man have to a greater or lesser degree admitted the ultimate mystery of personal unity while attempting to account for personal complexity in terms of principles or faculties or

functions. While there are strengths and weaknesses accompanying all approaches, I think, following James and Dewey, that some form of functionalism has the most possibilities for handling the issues involved. On such a view man can be described in the concrete as a believing-knowing-loving-feeling being. Since the distinctions are made in terms of functions, one keeps to a minimum the risk of fragmenting the person. The need to make the distinctions and the distinctions themselves must be justified pragmatically, that is, in terms of their contribution to the development of man. This procedure, of course, is but a specification of the controlling pragmatic principle (some would say assumption) that everything, including knowledge and metaphysics, must be evaluated on the basis of its service to human life rather than in terms of correspondence or coherence (internal conceptual consistency). Such an approach does not rule out, as I shall later indicate, the presence of some kind of correspondence and coherence, but these are not the ultimate determinants of the worth of a theory. Such features are not sought for their own sake but only because cumulative human experience has shown that without some degree of correspondence and coherence a theory or a metaphysics will not be serviceable.

In like fashion, faith and knowledge are not ends in themselves, sought for their own sakes, but ultimately they take their value from the enrichment of human life which they provide. They are functionally different modes of experience, both indispensable and not reducible one to the other. This does not mean, however, that they can ever be totally separated. They play different but not isolated roles, therefore, in the development of human life. Recognition of both their distinct functions and their intimate relation will make it possible to utilize them to the greatest possible extent.

Relation Between Faith and Knowledge

Up to this point the terms belief and faith have been used interchangeably, but it might be helpful if they were now distinguished. Henceforth belief will be understood as any affair of leading, as a pointing ahead—a going out beyond that for which there is evidence, or at least for which evidence is not present or consciously attended to. Every moment of our lives, from that of everyday routine to the most sophisticated scientific endeavor, is permeated by beliefs so understood. Faith as the term will now be employed will refer to a belief or a set of beliefs which bear upon human life in its comprehensive effort. Faith plays the role of holding together or attempting to hold together the diverse aspects or modes of human life or experience. It might be described as an integrating experience whereby knowing-experience, affective-experience, aesthetic-experience—in short, all forms of experience—are brought into a relatively cohesive whole which is expressed in the life of the person. Faith thereby serves to order, direct, illuminate and render meaningful human life. If the objection is made that this assertion surreptitiously transforms faith into knowledge, the reply would be that this follows only on the prior assumption that the *sole* way in which life is ordered, directed, illuminated and rendered meaningful is through some form of knowledge. I would insist that there are a variety of experiences, functionally and qualitatively different from knowledge, such as faith, love and art, which supply order, direction, illumination and meaning to the human condition.

Now beliefs, as the term is used here, are capable of verification upon which they become knowledge, or better, knowing-experiences. Faith, however, is such that only a lifetime of commitment and lived affirmation is adequate witness to its authenticity. I do not deny that there may be, and even to some extent must be, evidences of authenticity such as a degree

of personal fulfillment or a more humane community which flows from faith. These, however, can never be definitively compelling; they can never have the kind of verification which characterizes knowledge.⁵ (It should be mentioned that this holds as much for the faith of a non-theist as for that of a theist.)

In making such a sharp distinction between faith and knowledge, there is no intention of advocating a sentimental fideism or a naive anti-intellectualism. Actually, the position being proposed recognizes a much greater influence of knowledge and science upon faith than does the traditional viewpoint. I would insist that faith inevitably *involves* knowledge and, further, that a reflective faith ought to embody the very best knowledge of the culture at every moment of the culture's history. This hypothesis excludes, however, any identification of faith with a culturally and historically determined mode of knowledge.

It is the inevitable involvement of knowledge in any faith, particularly a reflective faith, which gives support to the view that faith is in some sense cognitive. It is at this point that the contention that faith is noncognitive experience appears most suspect. Nevertheless, I still insist on the difference between faith which involves or employs knowledge and faith which is knowledge—however that knowledge might be designated or qualified. No one today would deny that the history of the Christian faith manifests numerous knowledge-claims which have been subsequently judged erroneous. The dominant response to this on the part of Christian thinkers is to admit that these claims were excessive and that faith has often strayed into territory in which it did not belong. On this view, the task of the Christian thinker, specifically as Christian, is to discover that knowledge which belongs to the Christian faith in distinction from that achieved in other ways. On this basis, most Christian religions have long since surrendered their knowledge-claims in the realm of the so-called natural sciences, but the situation is quite different in metaphysics and moral

philosophy. Without pretending to handle the enormous difficulties involved in this question, I would simply state that, on my hypothesis, no religion, including Christianity, has any more competence in the realms of metaphysics and moral philosophy than it does in the realm of the natural sciences. Whatever knowledge is accessible in these spheres must be so to all men and not only to the initiates of a particular religion. Christian philosophers must be accorded the same autonomy that has only recently been granted to Christians who are scientists.

This hypothesis, however, should not be understood as calling for an isolation of faith or religion from whatever knowledge man has achieved. On the contrary, religion should be influenced by, and also influence, the knowledge of a culture. In my opinion, however, it cannot properly achieve these ends by placing itself in competition with the various sciences and philosophies.⁶ Faith or religion can make its contribution best when its adherents recognize that it has a different but no less important function than knowledge.

Rather than isolate or separate faith and knowledge, then, my intention is to render the relation between them more intimate and dynamic. My contention is that to characterize faith as knowledge leads to an isolation of faith inasmuch as it then must remain untouched by the ever-changing knowledge which characterizes man's intellectual endeavors. Hence, the alleged knowledge which results from faith has to be assigned to a distinct realm of being which is basically, if not totally, irrelevant to knowledge in other realms. Thus knowledge-claims for faith emerge which, in order to avoid such destructive conflicts with science and philosophy as have taken place in the past, form a protective isolationism whereby more and more our "faith-knowledge" is emptied of experiential content and relevance. In this way, regardless of what new facts or theories emerge in science, religious faith is safe, since it supposedly is concerned with a methodology and a sphere of

reality which is only peripherally related to that with which science is concerned.

The relation here suggested between faith and knowledge distinguishes them but neither assigns them to separate realms of reality nor puts them in competition with each other. Any living and reflective faith will inevitably attempt to express itself in concepts, metaphors and symbols and in doing so it will be obliged to utilize the concepts, metaphors and symbols which the culture makes available to it. I believe that this has always been the situation but now we are conscious of it. Today no one can doubt some influence of the historical and cultural context upon one's faith, but the dominant Roman Catholic tradition has been to insist that its beliefs, at least in their fundamental or essential dimensions, are independent of historical and cultural conditions and hence can be continually affirmed without need for or the possibility of any fundamental and radical change. In my opinion, this is equivalent to an absolutizing of historical and cultural forms, and results in a freezing of the faith into relatively static doctrines. Paradoxically, perhaps, by admitting the necessary and ever-present historical and cultural features of the faith expression of any moment, we are able to liberate the faith from any reduction to or identification with any particular historical and cultural forms. Such an attitude should maximize the possibilities for creative and imaginative reflection upon the faith-mystery. At the same time, it must continually maintain dynamic and relatively coherent and consistent relations both with its earlier expressions and the best knowledge and experience of its time. This, of course, is a very big order and I am not suggesting that in asserting it as a goal I have proved that it can be accomplished, must less that I have accomplished it. The aim here is much more modest—it is merely an attempt to indicate that the insistence on the uniqueness of faith and its noncognitive function and quality is not a call for some kind of anti-intellectualism or pseudomystical kind of faith.

As will be stated again and again, what is being asked for and suggested is the possibility of a new approach which will avoid both the rationalism of a religious objectivism and emotionalism of a religious subjectivism.

Actually such a position as I am arguing for would seem to be to the advantage of both knowledge and faith. As far as knowledge is concerned, it will not be asked to serve an apologetic role which distorts its characteristic function and historically has too often been an obstacle to its free development. Faith, meanwhile, would cease to rest on the shaky and ever-changing foundation of what happens to be the dominant science of the age. It too, given my viewpoint, is able to serve better as a liberating force in the human situation by expanding man's vision beyond his knowledge and constantly energizing him and spurring him on to greater realization. Faith can successfully perform such functions, however, only if it does not try to transform itself into a knowledge which supplies man with absolute certainty concerning the so-called important questions of life. The claim that we have knowledge supplied by religion inevitably diminishes the importance of knowledge achieved in other ways; this may take place subtly and indirectly, but the history of religion (Eastern perhaps even more so than Western) provides ample evidence of the harm that results from the various religions asserting that they possess some privileged knowledge. On the other hand, such "knowledge" and the faith involved are continually in jeopardy from new discoveries in the various spheres of man's intellectual life. Thus we have witnessed an increasing diminution of the knowledge supposedly "revealed" or given by faith.⁷ It is not so much that religion is fighting a losing battle in its knowledge assertions as that it is fighting the wrong battle. Religion is, or should be, oriented toward the continued expansion of human life and it should be a continuing challenge, sometimes directly but most often indirectly, to philosophy, science, art, literature and the like, to make their distinctive contributions to this end.

As I am describing it, faith would in a very real sense be serving knowledge, and we can also see how knowledge would serve faith. Knowledge would serve faith positively by continually supplying it with new and possibly more adequate concepts and symbols by which faith could develop and deepen. Negatively, knowledge would serve faith by criticizing the expressions of faith; it would thereby continually oblige the believer to be wary of his symbols and to avoid transforming them into idols.

In making this proposal, there is no intention of either resolving or bypassing the traditional tension between faith and reason. The hope is, rather, that the approach here suggested would lead this relation to a new depth and richness. In the final analysis, of course, this is an existential relation which is always inadequately described when presented abstractly. Reflection upon the relationship can be helpful only if it eventually results in a deepening of the living experience of the person and community as a whole. At best we can have but a continuing dialectic between distinct aspects of human experience in which both faith and reason are enriched. It is most important to underscore, however, the unacceptability of any dualism whereby, in Dewey's terms, we partition the territory, assigning one kind of reality to faith and another to reason. The relationship between the two is best expressed in terms of the processive-field metaphor which I have employed repeatedly. The relation is an "all at once, through and through," in which the aspects of faith and reason are interdependent, each suffusing the other. Faith and reason are thereby able to be differentiated interiorly—or to say the same thing, distinguished within the concrete field—but they are not able to be divided either horizontally or hierarchically.

Truth in General

I have been discussing at some length faith and knowledge but so far very little has been said directly about "religious

truth" which supposedly is in the process of being reconstructed. The simplest thing I could do, consistent with the viewpoint thus far advanced, would be to say that there is no religious truth any more than there is religious knowledge. Most of the arguments against asserting that faith gives a kind of knowledge, namely, religious knowledge, could be used with great force against a view that faith gives a kind of truth, namely religious truth. If truth is understood in dominantly and exclusively intellectualistic categories as a correspondence of the mind to reality or as a kind of rational coherence so that what results is a knowledge *about* reality, then, of course, I would deny that there is any religious truth. But the term truth has always had a richer and more varied connotation than knowledge. There is a long tradition of truth as a mode of life, as existential and personal.⁸ I would like, therefore, in briefest outline, to suggest an approach to religious truth which would be personalistic, processive and pragmatic. I am not presuming to prove anything but merely to indicate a possible direction which would be consonant both with the processive and relational world already portrayed and also with a religion such as Christianity.

Recall that the world to which I have been referring is made up of "fields" rather than substantial things, and that while each field has an identifying focus and an irreducible quality, these are interdependent and interpenetrating. A person in these terms is not a substantial entity capable of entering into relations but is rather a being who is constituted by his relations—physical, cultural, familial and the like. "My central point is that the human person does not exist as an isolated atom but is actually *constituted* by his relationships—to the world, to his family, to his fellow-men, to the Church and to God. It is important to stress that these relationships are not extrinsic or spatial but intrinsic; they belong to the very fabric of the person's being. Further, these relationships are not given once and for all. They change in small matters—a new job—and in

great—joining the Church. By these changes a man modifies his person.”⁹

Bearing these points in mind, allow me to propose the following working description of truth: truth in the primary though not exclusive sense of the term, refers to personal experience insofar as the relations constituting this experience are *satisfactory*. “Satisfactory relations” are to be understood here as those conducive to the developing life of the person.¹⁰ Thus truth is existential and participational rather than abstract and representative. Such a view does not deny the legitimacy of some form of abstract and representative truth but the ultimate justification for even this truth would be its relation to the life of man. For example, scientific propositions might be said to be true insofar as they represent certain relatively constant relations which, for the purposes of science, are considered in abstraction from the concrete existential situation in which they operate. Ultimately, however, science is true not because it represents or corresponds to a reality existing independently of man, but because it enables man to participate more fully in the ongoing processive reality with which he is continuous.¹¹

Given this pragmatic meaning of truth, knowledge can be designated true insofar as it establishes or enables man to establish satisfactory relations within the relational-continuum of reality. Consider a simple example. A people live along a river and are dependent upon it for their sustenance. For most of the year their situation (“field” or relational-complex) is relatively satisfactory. One month during the year the river floods and this renders their situation unsatisfactory inasmuch as their houses are destroyed. They eventually learn, however, that by raising their houses on poles, they can avoid the annual disaster. This knowledge results in more satisfactory relations, in a better situation, and hence can be called true.

I admit that the example chosen clearly supports the pragmatic theory of truth and that the life connections are not so

easily demonstrated when we are dealing with higher mathematics or theoretical physics or formal logic. The controversy surrounding this question is of long standing and I shall not presume to resolve it in a few words. In defense of pragmatism, however, I would simply say that none of its major proponents has ever denied the value and necessity of so-called theoretical knowledge—knowledge whose implications for life were not immediately evident. There is a *sense* in which knowledge is sought “for its own sake,” but this refers to the immediate end and not to the ultimate purpose of knowledge. Actually, the justification for temporarily prescinding from the so-called practical application of knowledge is that such an approach ultimately proves more *fruitful* in the over-all human endeavor.¹²

All of this adds up to the conclusion that man the knower is a participant in the development of reality and not merely a mirror or spectator of reality. But knowing is but one of a variety of ways by which man contributes to the development of reality, and hence truth, as I am describing it, is a more extensive category than knowledge. Following Dewey, I would assert that knowledge renders the human situation more satisfactory by resolving problematic situations. But all human experience is not restricted to responding to problems. Human development is achieved not only by overcoming difficulties and problems but also by adding to or enriching the human situation through creative activities. Thus painting, music, poetry, architecture and the like add a richness and dimension to reality whereby it can be designated “more satisfactory.” It is an analogous contribution, in my opinion, which is made by religion. Hence the denial that religion gives knowledge does not lessen its importance. Rather, it is an effort to spur religion to make its own distinctive and irreplaceable contribution. Given this view of different roles for different kinds of experience, it is then possible to assert that art, literature, crafts, religion—in short, any experience—can be called true to the

extent to which it renders the human situation relatively satisfactory.

In defining satisfactory as conducive to the life and development of the person, I must underscore again the point that the person is not an isolated entity and hence there is no question here of advocating a destructive individualism. When the person is viewed as essentially communal and the community as essentially personal, as they must be in the relational world here proposed, many artificial aspects of the tension between person and community are removed. Further, much of the fruitless debate centering around truth as subjective or objective can be avoided because it is possible to account for the respective values of subjectivity and objectivity by differentiating them functionally rather than ontologically.¹³

Since our world is not only rational but also processive, no set of relations can ever be more than relatively satisfactory. It is true that certain relations, those we call physical,¹⁴ are changing at such a slow pace that for most practical purposes we can treat them as regular or constant. In an organism as complex as the human person, however, in which the constituting relations are so numerous, the change is more evident and rapid. Any pattern of immutable truth can only be an abstraction from the concrete flow which characterizes all reality in general and human reality in particular. If truth is understood as a mode of life, this lack of immutability is to be rejoiced in rather than lamented.¹⁵ Truth, on these terms, therefore, is essentially and necessarily developmental because the life or living relations which it signifies is such.

Truth as Created and Discovered

The assertion that "truth is developmental" has become a commonplace even within the Roman Catholic community, which has been traditionally identified with the position that truth, especially religious truth, is immutable. The radical and

disturbing implications of changing or developmental truth are, however, for the most part avoided or glossed over. Upon closer analysis most theories of the development of truth, particularly those concerned with religious truths, are merely asserting that man's grasp of these truths is never exhaustive. Hence, his understanding of them can develop indefinitely. Thus we can discover more truths than we now possess and we can discover more about those truths already in our possession. The pragmatic claim, however, to the effect that man actually *creates* or *makes* truth remains for most people an absurd and repugnant doctrine. Such a radical developmental view of truth must appear absurd as long as one retains a view of reality as permanently structured independent of human activity. Within such a framework man's task as far as truth is concerned can only be to discover those ideas or judgments which represent or correspond to the essential structure of reality. If, however, we posit a radically processive world such as was earlier described—a world or reality which was becoming, changing, developing in every dimension of its being, then a "truth" which becomes or is made appears less absurd. The very process whereby man "makes" reality "more satisfactory" involves a truth dimension.

Again, I must stress that I am not so presumptuous as to imagine that such an assertion refutes the many objections which have been and are still raised against pragmatism. James' contention that it means exactly the same thing to say that an idea "is useful because it is true" or "it is true because it is useful"¹⁶ remains a scandal to many reflective men. I fully realize that the serious implications of the classical objections against a pragmatic theory of truth have not been overcome merely by describing truth in terms of "satisfactory relations." The critic can still ask, "Is idea or judgment 'A' true because it issues in more satisfactory relations or does it issue in more satisfactory relations because it is true?" I do not believe that pragmatism can give a satisfactory answer

to such a question—at least none which would satisfy one for whom this is a vital question. The best that can be done is to suggest that from a pragmatic perspective such questions are not really significant.

If the emphasis in the pursuit of truth is placed, as it is in pragmatism, on rendering more satisfactory the human situation in general and specific situations in particular, the question of "truth in itself" becomes irrelevant at worst and uninteresting at best. The energy and efforts of man from this perspective are best directed toward changing the present world—making it truer. That is why the method or process of verification is so central to any pragmatic concern for truth. Indeed those critics are not completely wrong when they say that pragmatism gives us a method of verification rather than a theory of truth. This critique loses most of its force, however, when we recall the radically processive world posited by pragmatism. In such a world, verifying becomes, in part at least, a process of creating. Further, creating and discovering are not antithetical or mutually exclusive. This follows since only by creating various concepts, ideals and patterns of life can we discover those which further the development of man and the world and those which impede or retard it.

I cannot emphasize too strongly that throughout this consideration of truth I am attempting to describe an approach to what has been called "lived truth" rather than simply "propositional truth." As has already been indicated, the primary and ultimate ground of truth is the human person viewed as essentially relational and processive. I must stress that this does not mean that the human person is the primary or ultimate ground, absolutely speaking. Even, however, if one *believes* that the human person is related to and developing with an *Other* who is not confined by the limits of humanity, the only truth which man can possess, be, discover or create is that which has its locus within the human reality. In other terms, God can be true for man or be man's truth only to the degree

to which man, individually and collectively, is involved in an existential, living relationship with him. Hence, to approach truth or God by way of the concrete human person is in no way to subordinate God to man. Rather it is to recognize that whether we speak of man building himself into nature, reality or God, there is no possibility of bypassing the human situation—no possibility of judging the success of his efforts with reference to any reality, norm or standard “outside” man himself. It is in this sense, then, that all truth must be relative—relative to the human self understood as at once individual and communal.

The classical dangers of relativism such as whimsical individualism or crass subjectivism can be avoided by a pragmatic approach to truth inasmuch as it does not admit the human subject as an atomistic individual. There can be no true fulfillment or satisfactory experience for the person in isolation from the various relations whereby he is constituted.

The approach to truth as primarily a mode of life rather than a characteristic of propositions follows from pragmatism being a life-oriented rather than knowledge-oriented philosophy. In so describing the orientation of pragmatism, I must again deny that there is implied here a lack of respect for and appreciation of the importance of knowledge. As was pointed out in the preceding chapter, however, it does explicitly deny that knowledge is the sole means by which man gains a hold on reality. Knowledge, as we have seen, is but one of a variety of experiences by which man participates in the process of reality. Knowledge, then, is a function in the service of human life, and its worth, justification and truth is *ultimately* justified in terms of the contribution which it makes to this life. Such a viewpoint does not exclude or diminish the importance of activities such as abstracting, theorizing and speculating, but it does insist that such efforts cannot be evaluated definitively in isolation from the long-range influence they have upon the developing human community. Hence,

pragmatism will always insist that the "nature" of truth is intimately bound up with the criterion of truth.

Pragmatic Criterion of Truth

In the history of philosophy there has emerged, with numerous variations, three fundamental theories of truth—the correspondence theory, the coherence theory and the pragmatic theory. The correspondence theory, which is the oldest and most enduring, affirms the correspondence of the mind with reality as the basic criterion of truth. The various coherence theories maintain that the only reliable criterion of truth is the internal consistency of a set of ideas. Pragmatism, in its many forms, insists that the fundamental criterion of truth lies in the fruitful consequences which follow from an idea or judgment. To some extent, I believe that in any significant theory of truth there is an attempt to involve or take account of each of these criteria. Eventually there will emerge some genius who will give us a new synthesis whereby we can move beyond the classical conflicts that still surround these three theories. At this moment, however, it would seem that reflective men must select one of these approaches as more fundamental and proceed to develop a theory of truth accordingly. As I have already indicated, I make no pretense to be developing anything which would merit being called a "theory" of truth. I am, however, suggesting an approach to truth which I believe has the most possibility for further development. Allow me, therefore, to indicate briefly something of what such an approach would involve.

The primary criterion of truth presupposed by the pragmatic approach here being suggested is quite simply—too simply perhaps—the life of the community. Does a particular idea, theory, doctrine, poem, painting, building, practice and the like contribute to the enrichment, illumination, development—in short, to the quality of life of the community? If it does,

then it can claim some measure of truth. I am well aware of the fact that such a succinct description of the pragmatic criterion of truth will raise more questions than it answers. What, for example, does one mean by "quality of life"? Which community is to be the determining one in any evaluation of an idea, belief or action? How is one to determine whether or not something really does contribute to the quality of life of a community? These and many other objections inevitably and properly have been and will be raised against any pragmatic approach to truth.

Without presuming to handle all the levels and implications of the classical objections against pragmatism, allow me to give at least a preliminary response—positive, not polemical—to these questions. It should be acknowledged at the outset that to make the life of the community the central and ultimately decisive criterion in evaluating the truth or worth of any idea, belief or action is itself an option or act of faith which is irreducible and unprovable. I am not concerned to argue here whether this is the best criterion available to man—though I obviously *believe* that it is. The point made earlier concerning the faith dimension at the base of any metaphysics, however, should be kept in mind.

Granted that the life of the community is to be our ultimate determinate for thought and action, how are we to understand the phrase "quality of life"? Negatively, it does not refer to any external or transcendent norm according to which particular ideas and actions are judged. Every life, individual and collective, is permeated by a pervasive quality which is directly experienced. The judgment that the quality of life of a person or community is better or truer or higher is always a comparative judgment. Just as it is possible to judge the quality of one painting as better than another although there does not exist some absolute quality against which both are judged, so it is possible to judge the quality of life of one community

as better than that of another though there exists no absolutely perfect community.

Because it is also possible and indeed necessary to project an ideal in terms of which actual communities are to be formed and developed, there has been the tendency since the time of Plato to conclude that we can judge one reality better than another only if we have some absolute norm as the ultimate basis for our judgment. Pragmatism, however, is able to assign a role to ideals which avoids either positing them as absolute antecedently existing entities or reducing them to useless subjectivistic fictions. "Ideals," James asserted, "ought to aim at the *transformation of reality*—no less."¹⁷ Dewey links ideals to possibilities, novelties and creative imagination. In contrast to the classical meaning, Dewey contends that in modern life "potentiality" means "the possibility of novelty, of invention, of radical deviation."¹⁸ In another place, he insists that "all possibilities, as possibilities, are ideal in character," but, he goes on to say, "the reality of ideal ends as ideals is vouched for by their undeniable power of action. An ideal is not an illusion because imagination is the organ through which it is apprehended. For *all* possibilities reach us through the imagination."¹⁹ Here again is an instance of a running theme of this essay, namely that pragmatism offers us a third alternative beyond both subjectivism and objectivism.

Up to this point I have been using the term "community" without further specification. One of the problems to be confronted by the approach which I am taking is that there are many communities: how are we to decide which is to be the criterion for judgment? It might appear that this question can be answered easily by simply stating that the human community is to be our touchstone. Now, there is a sense in which I believe this to be true, but a few qualifications are in order. To begin with, as of this moment of history, there are really many human communities. *The* human community is still in a very real sense an ideal, a project, a task—it is what we believe should be

created and that which, hopefully, we are creating. True, we have at this juncture of man's development a few clues as to what will further this development and what will obstruct or retard it. Most important, perhaps, is the awareness that in the life of communities as in that of persons, whatever cuts them off from others, whatever isolates them or turns them toward themselves, tends to impede their growth and leads to such destructive forms as egoism, racism and religious and political nationalisms. Hence, any community, religious or other, must continually reflect upon its beliefs, doctrines and actions in order to determine whether they are contributing to or obstructing the movement toward the realization of the human community.

There remains the all-important question of just *how* we determine whether our beliefs, ideas or actions do further the well-being of the human community. As is well known, the pragmatic response is at once deceptively simple and highly controversial—only by observing the consequences which follow from an idea or an action, according to pragmatism, can we discover those which are worth-while—those which are “true.” Numerous objections immediately spring to mind—among them: which consequences? Actually any idea or action might and does give rise to numerous consequences, sometimes conflicting ones. For example, a consequence may be, or at least appear to be, good for an individual person but bad for the community. Or, an early consequence might appear good and later issue in consequences which are bad. There is no necessity to multiply these objections, since they are familiar to most, nor will I claim to be able to refute them. Actually I do not believe they can be refuted, simply because I think they are describing the complexity of the human condition rather than presenting difficulties peculiar to a theory called “pragmatism.” Again, of course, one of my crucial assumptions is showing. I am assuming that there are no absolute or definitive resolutions to significant human problems—further, that while we do advance in many different ways, each advance gives rise to new problems or

difficulties. If one objects that pragmatism is deficient because it cannot give, *a priori*, absolute once-and-for-all resolutions to human problems, pragmatism can only reply that it cannot give such resolutions because it does not believe that the human situation allows them. At the same time, pragmatism refuses to accept, as an alternative to absolutism, a destructive individualism, subjectivism or nihilism. Whatever shortcomings or difficulties are to be found in such thinkers as Peirce, James and Dewey, it is simply a failure to read them on any but the most superficial level which would interpret them as saying that "anything goes" or that every individual can make up whatever values or truths he *feels* like. No, each of these men in his own way believed and endeavored to show that men can live and live more fully without the aid of absolutes and in the absence of absolute certainty even on those matters which bear most deeply and intimately upon human life.

What is often overlooked in criticizing pragmatism is that there is no pretense on the part of the pragmatist of starting from scratch or thinking or acting as if man had no past. "We can be aware of consequences," Dewey tells us, "only because of previous experiences."²⁰ Experience cumulates and it is this cumulative experience, funded with intelligence, which is the basis for projecting beyond the present. Ideas, beliefs, ideals are all in a sense hypotheses—they are guides to further thought and action, but the only way we have of winnowing out and developing those which are of worth or are true is by continually attending to the consequences which ensue—or by observing the quality of life to which they give rise. Hence, the human community is, in the broad sense, experimental and self-correcting; while it does achieve consummatory moments, these are never absolute or final but simultaneously serve as instruments for further development.

If these are the general conditions for all beliefs and actions, then the belief in God and other religious activities are not exempt from them. I am, of course, rejecting any claim to a

privileged source of knowledge or experience which enables a religion or its beliefs or doctrines to escape the demanding test of service to the human community as the measure of its truth.

Religious Truth

Within this pragmatic framework how are we to understand religious truth? Religious truth will differ from other truth only in its comprehensiveness and not because it pertains to a different kind of reality. Now, the comprehensiveness referred to is not a kind of knowledge but the comprehensiveness of faith as earlier described. Religious truth primarily refers to personal life (which, remember, is essentially communal) considered in its fundamental integrating, ordering, directing and meaning-giving activities. The person performing such activities may *believe* that they are performed in the presence of and on the basis of a continuing encounter with an *Other*; in such instances the religious truth may be called theistic. Again, since religious truth is here described in life categories, it is evident that immutability is ruled out, but this does not mean that there is no continuity or cumulative community experience which quite possibly expresses an irreversible direction. Hence, an eschatological religious vision such as the one embodied in Christianity should, in this respect at least, find the pragmatic view of religious truth most congenial.

Given such a view of religious truth, what, if any, role can be assigned to creeds, or dogmas or sacred writings? To begin with it is evident that from such a perspective they cannot supply us with information or knowledge about God. Further, any God which might be affirmed in this religious truth could never be an object of knowledge. Here again I can only allude to one of the great philosophical questions. I can only state that the approach which I am making does not exclude the possibility of faith in God or even experience *of* or *with* God,

but it does rule out any knowledge, however minimal, *about* God. If one insists that the only worth-while function of creeds, dogmas and sacred scripture is to give knowledge, then I think that the game is finished and we are forced from the evidence supplied by historical experience to conclude that they are worthless. But, in my opinion, this is not their function. Rather, they must be seen as efforts of the community to articulate its continuing "encounter" with the "nameless one." These articulations are always necessary for the deepening and development of the life of faith. They serve as religious energizers insofar as they intensify and expand the life of the person and the community. They do this by continually enlarging man's vision, by stimulating him to better modes of action, by spurring him to move beyond the relatively inadequate situation in which he finds himself and by adding to human life a quality and dimension which can be achieved in no other way.

It is permissible, in accordance with the viewpoint here proposed, to believe that these community expressions are formed in response to a divine "call"²¹ but it is not permissible to overlook the fact that the response is always given in human terms which are essentially cultural and historical. This does not rule out the possibility that some of these articulations have a unique and indispensable role in the continuing life of the community. In the case of Christianity, this would most assuredly hold for Sacred Scripture. Even, here, however, I would insist that the Bible is the work of the human community though I *believe* that it proceeds from a community experience with that *Other* who is not reducible to the human community.

I do not wish to minimize the radical nature and serious implications of the change which I am suggesting in the Christian understanding of and relationship to the Scriptures. Nor do I imagine that any hypothesis that I advance does not demand extensive development and refinement. From a crude pragmatic standpoint, however, it would be well for the Church not to rule out all explanations of the role of Scripture except those

which make knowledge-claims for the *Word* of God. As one bit of knowledge after another must be surrendered in view of new experience and insights, the "Scripture gives knowledge" advocate retreats to a gradually diminishing base of knowledge. Consequently, it becomes more and more difficult to maintain any kind of "revelation as knowledge" interpretation of the sacred writings. It is rather ironic that Roman Catholics should feel particularly defensive concerning the knowledge dimension of the Scriptures since they have traditionally avoided placing all their theological eggs in the scriptural basket. The Catholic emphasis upon the primacy of the community and upon its historicity lends itself to the kind of interpretation I am suggesting.

The great fear of those who hold out for some knowledge content in the Scripture is that the *only* alternative is to see the Scriptures as a collection of subjectivistic myths resulting from the psychological projection of man's desires. I would argue that we are not confronted with the alternatives of either a hard core of knowledge, essentially untouched by psychological, historical and cultural factors, or a radical subjectivism, historicism and cultural relativism. Let me try to sketch briefly a mode of scriptural interpretation which frees it from any particular knowledge content and at the same time keeps the Scriptures from being reduced to a subjectivistic production of man. To begin with, we must surrender the notion of a self-contained text embodying its meaning independently of man. As a working hypothesis I would suggest viewing the Scriptures as a unique and continuing locus of the divine-human encounter. On this hypothesis both man and the sacred text are living and thus developing. The Scriptures serve as the focus and "meeting place" of the continuing and ever-new dialogue between man and God. The marvel and the mystery is that though originally expressed in the language and thought patterns of a particular culture and moment in history, the Word can be received by all men according to their development—

cultural and historical, as well as personal. This means that while there is continuity there is not identity of meaning, understanding or truth. What is ruled out here is any notion of a static meaning or static truth combined with a dynamic understanding. Instead, what is being affirmed is a developing man and community of which the Scriptures are also an organic and developing factor. On this hypothesis the Scriptures would not be viewed as *merely* subjectivistic projections of man. On the other hand, they would not be books that embody meaning apart from their relation to man; they would not, in consequence, be outside the cultural, historical and sociological realities which enter into the continuing formation of man.

Now, as anyone knows who has even a superficial awareness of what has been happening within Biblical theology in recent years, much of what I am suggesting has already been recognized and to some extent accepted within the Church. In general, however, there is still a conviction that a core of knowledge about man and God, if not the world, escapes the conditions of history and culture. This leads to a certain irony, for many who would readily concede that the Church has been misled by too great a dependence on Aristotelian metaphysics feel that the way out is to return to the Scriptures where "Christian knowledge" is to be found in its pristine form. The way back draws upon the tools of cultural and historical criticism, but the assumption is that what results is the discovery of a transcendent eternal verity rather than the experience of a particular "encounter" in history between God and man. It further assumes that we then possess that knowledge, however minimal, that God wants us to have. This is another manifestation of an unhealthy dualism, since it tends to make all other knowledge relatively superfluous. The faith-knowledge distinction here suggested avoids such a dualism since it refers to two necessary and indispensable modes of human experience both of which are oriented to the one world and one God.

What all of this reduces to is a denial of the claim that God

has sent us a message in the form of the Scriptures. Surely, if God were a message sender, he would do a better job—his message would not be expressed in such a way that those who claim to be following it would end up hating and killing each other. Whatever difficulties attach to my approach, and they are legion, at least I think it avoids picturing God as an incompetent wireless operator.²²

Religious Symbols

In any developed reconstruction of religious truth, it will be necessary to present a doctrine of religious language in general and the role of religious symbols in particular. This, needless to say, is a formidable task particularly within the framework of a pragmatism which cannot settle for any restricted linguistic analysis but must draw upon the data and insights produced in anthropology, psychology, sociology and art. For my purposes, it will suffice to indicate what I believe to be a few of the basic features of any philosophy of religious language which would be consistent with the pragmatic world view advanced earlier.

In the first place all religious language and indeed all religious rites, practices and institutions must be regarded as in some way symbolic. Without necessarily accepting every aspect of Paul Tillich's famous theory of religious symbols, I would, nevertheless, insist upon the following text as a minimal and controlling axiom for any adequate theory of religious symbols:

Whatever we say about that which concerns us ultimately, whether or not we call it God, has a symbolic meaning. *It points beyond itself while participating in that to which it points.* In no other way can faith express itself adequately. The language of faith is the language of symbols.²³

A corollary of the axiom that whatever we say about God is said symbolically²⁴ is the assertion that religious symbols are

not representative but functional and participational. John Herman Randall gives just such an interpretation:

A symbol is in no sense representative: it does not stand for or take the place of anything other than itself. Rather, it *does* something in its own right: it provokes a characteristic response in men. . . . What is important to recognize is that religious symbols belong with social and artistic symbols, in the group of symbols that are both *nonrepresentative* and *noncognitive*. Such noncognitive symbols can be said to symbolize not some external thing that can be indicated apart from their operation, but rather what they themselves *do*, their peculiar functions.²⁵

What, then, are the "peculiar functions" of religious symbols? I would suggest that they serve to order, direct, integrate and intensify the developing life of the community and those persons who are expressions of the community.

In addition to the functional and participational dimensions of religious symbols, pragmatism must also insist that they are in some way—whether individually or collectively or both, consciously or unconsciously or both—creations or constructions of the human community.²⁶ Now, nothing is more upsetting to most Christians than the suggestion that the symbols, rites and practices by which they order their lives are products of the human community. Yet it would seem that the Christian as much if not more than any other believer would insist upon the constructed and tentative aspects of those concepts, symbols or institutions concerning that inexpressible mystery whom we have termed "God." Such an attitude is a protection against that temptation designated "idolatry," which attributes human expressions to God, thereby avoiding our responsibility for them. Further, the recognition that our concepts and symbols concerning God are products of our own making enables us to avoid that fanaticism and intolerance which follows from believing that we are the chosen defenders of God's attributes.

In my opinion, only a faith which allows—indeed which demands—continual reconstruction of its conceptual, symbolic and institutional expressions can enable man to avoid worshiping his own handiwork. It is this very awareness that the symbols which we employ and by which we live are *our* creations that continually protects the “moreness” of the mystery which Christian faith affirms. Nor does the “construct” aspect of our concepts or symbols render them subjectivistic or unreal. Since symbolization and conceptualization are means by which man participates in and contributes to the development of reality, the worth and truth of such symbols and concepts depends upon their serving this function.

The objection might be raised that while religious symbols can be shown to have served an illuminating and energizing function in the past, they were able to do this because they were not consciously recognized as symbols. The contention here is that the pragmatic efficacy of these symbols was due to the belief that they were “given” by God or some power beyond man. Hence, the question which now must be confronted is whether we can be conscious that we are the authors of our symbols and still have them serve the function which they have served in the past. Of course, the only convincing evidence that they can so function depends upon the life of the community which employs symbols with this awareness. The best that a speculative effort such as this can do is to suggest what the positive fruits of a particular symbol might be—this I will attempt in the chapter on God. It is also possible, however, to call attention to the fact that works of art and literature play similar and analogous roles to that suggested for religious symbols and no one seems compelled to deny that they are human constructs or creations. “Art,” Dewey contends, “has been the means of keeping alive the sense of purposes that outrun evidence and of meanings that transcend indurated habit.”²⁷ I believe that the function which Dewey here assigns to art is

pre-eminently the function of religion in general and religious symbols in particular.

Religious symbols, then, are always constructions of some human community and must continually be evaluated in terms of their service to the ongoing life of that community. While they are constructions of the community, however, it is not legitimate to rule out, *a priori*, the possibility that the constructing is done in the *presence* of or in an experience with this *Other* whom we traditionally call God. It is to a consideration of this *Other* that I must return in a later chapter in order to determine what reconstructions are here called for which would be consistent with the viewpoint or perspective underlying my entire effort.

NOTES

1. Cf. Morris R. Cohen's introduction to Charles S. Peirce, *Chance, Love, and Logic* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1956), p. xxv. "Man is bound to speculate about the universe beyond the range of his knowledge, but he is not bound to indulge the vanity of setting up such speculations as absolutely certain dogmas."

2. Three such efforts are: Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); Michael Novak, *Belief and Unbelief* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1965); and Richard C. Hinners, *Ideology and Analysis* (New York: Desclée De Brouwer, 1966).

3. I do not rule out the possibility of a relative ranking or hierarchy. For example, it is permissible to rank one food better than another food, one poem better than another poem and one religion better than another religion. I am calling into question, however, the advisability of attempting to establish an over-all hierarchy in which religion would be ranked higher than science or art, or the other way around.

4. Cf. Gabriel Moran, "The God of Revelation," *Commonweal* (February 10, 1967), p. 502: "If the word 'knowledge' connotes the gathering in of objective data and the quantitative increase of facts about the world, then God's revelation cannot be identified with knowledge. God does not compete with finite objects for man's attention; he does not fit into our schema of known things. On the other hand, if 'knowing' can designate man's primordial receptiveness to being and man's thrust forward to the fullness of life, then the Christian would claim that he knows and is known by God."

Moran is describing two distinct kinds of human "transactions" which characterize reality. In my terminology they are two kinds of "experience" rather than two kinds of "knowledge." More important than the language employed, however, is the recognition of the distinction of activities. That I do not consider the "language employed" unimportant is evident from my attempt to change this language.

5. I am not restricting "verification" to a specific form but I am presupposing, as I have already indicated, that any verification designated *cognitive* will differ in kind from "verification" through faith, love, art and the like. Cognitive verification admits of a precision and control which is neither possible nor proper in other experiences. This is in no way a defect in these other experiences but simply indicates a difference in them. My position allows for a variety of modes of verification, one of which can be designated *cognitive*.

6. This, of course, is the central point of Dewey's critique of religion. Cf., for example, *The Quest for Certainty*, pp. 303 ff.

7. John Herman Randall, Jr., *The Role of Knowledge in Western Religion* (Boston: Starr King Press, 1958), p. 11. "Each new attempt to set up an assailable preserve for religious truth has had to surrender more territory than its predecessor."

8. I concede that to a great extent the same can be said of knowledge. Still, it can be argued that the term "truth," because it lacks the relatively precise meaning which knowledge has increasingly received, can be employed in reference to religion without the distortions that accompany a similar use of the term "knowledge."

9. Eugene Fontinell, "Contraception and the Ethics of Relationships," *What Modern Catholics Think About Birth Control*, William Birmingham, ed. (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 246.

10. For a fuller development of the category of "satisfactory," see below, pp. 139 ff.

11. Although Leslie Dewart presents a developmental theory of truth which differs in many respects from the approach I am making, there is complete agreement on the following: "Although truth is not the adequation of the intellect to being (insofar as understanding consists in the assimilation of being by the formal mediation of concepts), truth might nevertheless be called an adequation of man to reality, in the sense that it is man's self-achievement within the requirements of a given situation. . . . In this context adequation would not connote conformity, correspondence, likeness or similarity. It would connote adjustment, usefulness, expediency, proficiency, sufficiency and adaptation." *The Future of Belief* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), p. 110. For a fuller treatment of Dewart's theory of truth, see his, *The Foundations of Belief* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969).

12. Josiah Royce noted the twofold aspect of "disinterestedness" and "practicality" which characterizes science. Cf. *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1892). "The value of higher insight is seldom immediate. Science has an aspect of noble play about it. It is not the activity, it is the often remote outcome of science, that is of practical service" (p. 7). "Even the hardest and least popular reflective researches are to be justified, in the long run, by their bearings upon life" (p. 24).

13. See above, pp. 61; also below, pp. 140 ff.

14. By which I mean both the relatively constant relations grasped by "common sense" and those described in the physical sciences.

15. It is significant that what we ordinarily call the lower forms of existence come closest to immutability in the monotonous repetition of their actions.

16. James, *Writings*, p. 431.

17. James, *The Letters of William James*, Vol. I, p. 270.

18. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), p. 58.

19. Dewey, *A Common Faith*, pp. 23, 43.

20. Dewey, *Experience and Education*, p. 79.

21. The terms "encounter" and "call" are placed within quotes to indicate that they are to be understood symbolically rather than literally. For more on this point, see below, p. 241.

22. Cf. Dewart, *The Future of Belief*, p. 8. "Christianity has a *mission*, not a *message*." Also Gabriel Moran, "The God of Revelation," p. 503. "The last glimmering hopes of man for sacred messages and divine institutions were extinguished with Christ. What had been implicit has now become an unavoidable fact, namely, that man is the high point of creation and that there are no messages or truths above him. If God is to be sought, it can only be in human life. God can be for man only as man takes up his own responsibility and frees himself from every form of slavery."

23. Paul Tillich, *The Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Torchbook Edition, 1958), p. 45 (*italics added*).

24. At the risk of scandalizing most of my coreligionists for whom symbol always means "mere symbol," I must insist that trinity, incarnation, resurrection, eucharist and the like are symbols. This view does not exclude the possibility of some "historical" dimension to such symbols. Without presuming to resolve the enormously subtle and complex questions which such a view raises, I would simply suggest that reflection upon these beliefs within the metaphysical framework already proposed may enable us to avoid both a literalistic objectivism which places these "events" in the same order as Caesar's crossing the Rubicon, and a superficial subjectivism which reduces these "symbols" to mere psychological projections.

25. Randall, *The Role of Knowledge in Western Religion*, pp. 113-114. Randall has noted the similarity of his position on symbols to that of Paul Tillich. Cf. *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. LI, No. 5 (March 4, 1954), p. 159.

26. For an acknowledgment of the "constructive" and the "functional" aspects of symbols by a sociologist, cf. Hugh Dalziel Duncan, *Symbols in Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 46-47. "Machines signal through built-in message tracks, animals communicate through gesture and sound, but man, and man alone, *creates* the symbols he uses in communication. He is able not only to communicate, but to communicate about communication. No matter how 'fixed' a meaning may be in ritual, magic, or tradition, it must always pass the test of relevance; that is, it must help men to deal with problems which arise as men act together."

27. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 348.

CHAPTER III

MORALITY: A PRAGMATIC RECONSTRUCTION

If there is one area in which pragmatism seems even more suspect than in its philosophy of truth, it is in its philosophy of morality. For most people pragmatism is another name for crude expediency, whimsical individualism or destructive relativism. According to a widely held view, particularly among Roman Catholics, pragmatic morality means that as long as something "satisfies" someone, it is good. Because of this understanding, really misunderstanding, of pragmatic morality, religion and pragmatism appear unreconcilable almost by definition. For this reason an important task of this chapter will be to indicate that whatever shortcomings or inadequacies are found in pragmatic morality, it is more subtle and complex than is usually thought. Another task will be to indicate the distinctive possibilities which pragmatism offers for the moral life.

Before considering some of the distinguishing features of a pragmatic ethics, it will be helpful to indicate what I believe are the minimal conditions for any moral philosophy or ethics¹ which has a chance of meeting the needs of contemporary men.

Conditions for a Viable Ethics

In the history and development of any philosophical question, a certain degree of polarization is almost inevitable. No

philosopher likes to admit that his philosophy is one-sided or that he has overlooked relevant data. That is why, for example, a philosophical idealist is convinced that he has incorporated into his system what is valid in philosophical realism. It is evident from the history of philosophy that after a period of time the very terms and categories within which a philosophical question is phrased become obstacles to any further development of that question. When that happens, nothing will suffice but a fundamental recasting of the entire question. Such is the situation, I believe, in the polarization of ethics in the form of moral relativism and moral absolutism. The language and concepts employed are no longer useful. There can be no denying that the relativistic critique of static absolutism was necessary, but this critique in itself has not brought forth a viable and meaningful ethic.

Instead, then, of speaking and debating in terms of absolutism or relativism, it might be more helpful to change our terminology and acknowledge the need for both continuity and development. Without continuity, we are reduced to anarchic atomism; without development we are stratified in an abstractionism that becomes increasingly impervious to new insights and experiences. Much, of course, depends on how one understands the terms "continuity" and "development." Does development of self-consciousness, for example, mean simply that we are becoming more aware of what we have always been, or does it involve a more fundamental modification of what we are? Is man a being whose nature or essence is given by God, and whose task is simply to discover this and act accordingly? Or is man a being who is actually involved in the making of himself; one who must struggle to form himself without any foreordained pattern in correspondence with which he can judge his actions?

The meaning which one attaches to the term "continuity" will depend on one's understanding of development. Continuity is more easily accounted for by doing as the Greeks first did—

posit certain unchanging principles which permeate all changing beings. If one rejects such unchanging principles, as contemporary thought in general and pragmatism in particular have done, then continuity can only mean that the new man emerges out of the old by *transformation* rather than by either actualization of an already existing potency or by simple negation.² In any event, the difference between these two views of man is tremendous and nowhere are the implications of these contrasting views more crucial than in the sphere of morality. Those who adhere to the classical or to the traditional view of man's nature as essentially unchanging, inevitably argue that the contemporary, evolutionary view tends to be destructive of man's moral life. Developmental morality appears to imply that man is a rudderless ship at the mercy of the unpredictable sea of life.

The appeal of the traditional position cannot be underestimated. It could not have attracted so many men in the past and continue to attract so many in the present unless it touched deeply, certain human needs. Any ethic which fails to recognize those needs and fails to take account of the traditional response is unquestionably shortsighted and superficial. A mystique of the new and the changing is nothing more than the other side of the mystique of the old and the permanent. Nevertheless, it is my opinion that no moral philosophy will be adequate which is inconsistent with or merely superficially consistent with the view of man and the world that has been slowly emerging in the last several hundred years.

Pragmatism, as I understand it, embodies a specific form of this contemporary view of man. Modern science, of course, has played and is playing a central and perhaps the decisive role in the development of this "new man." There can be no adequate moral philosophy which fails to incorporate the data and insights produced by science in all its forms. The proper relationship between moral philosophy and science is a long way from being established; it is already clear, however, that any simplistic

scientism or identification of science and morality is unacceptable. At the same time, there can be no partitioning of territory in which man's moral life remains fundamentally untouched by the revolutions in man's knowledge of himself and the world. From a historical point of view it is quite understandable that when the more specialized scientific methods could find no room for values, the needs of man's moral life would be met by religions or philosophies which held themselves *essentially* independent of science. However necessary this dualism might have been to avoid a superficial scientism and rationalistic mechanism, it is now clear that we must begin to forge a new morality which addresses itself to the new aspects of man and the world which contemporary science has not only discovered but to some extent created. This, of course, is a monumental task which will not be accomplished by one man or even by one generation. In our moral life, however, we cannot wait for the emergence of a definitive ethics, even if one were forthcoming.

The human situation is such that we are compelled to decide and act here and now, in the midst of complex, confusing and often apparently contradictory data and principles. Of necessity, then, any proposed ethics must have an aspect of tentativeness and incompleteness about it. "There can be no final truth in ethics any more than in physics," William James insisted, "until the last man has had his experience and said his say."³ For many, any such concession is enough to indicate the worthlessness of such a provisional ethic. There are others, however, who are willing to acknowledge that such an approach may not be due simply to the inadequacy of its proponents; it may possibly be rooted in the human situation. It is a commonplace to say that we live in an age permeated by insecurity. I do not think that this is a feature peculiar to the twentieth century. It is undoubtedly true that the rapidity of change and the increased complexity of contemporary life have intensified human insecurity. But history indicates that from the first a dimension

of insecurity permeated the human community, and the specific way or ways in which each age or culture tried to cope with this insecurity determined in great part the life style of that age or culture.

Since history and psychology further indicate that no person or community of persons can exist for any length of time in a situation of complete and total peril, the necessity for stability is evident. As a minimum, this is what the traditional ethics has always sought, but it did so by reducing the "precarious" dimension of the human situation to the realm of the superficial and by dividing the world up into the eternal and the temporal. Values were to be found in the eternal world and remained untouched by the contingency of the everyday world. Whatever nostalgia we may have for this world view, and however much indebted we are to it for having served man so long and so well, it is not a world view which is any longer viable. The absolute certainty and unflinching security which were the marks of that world are no longer possible human options. In contrast, the contemporary world is characterized by uncertainty and insecurity. The initial recognition of this situation, whether individually or collectively, cannot help but be traumatic. The Western world's value-system has collapsed and it is the experience of this collapse which is dramatically expressed through the myth of the "death of God." In the wake of this collapse, no reflective man can avoid asking with Dostoevski, "If there is no God, then are all things permitted?" (The God-believer's version of this question would be: "If God has given us no absolute values or commands, then are all things permitted?")

Many religiously committed persons are, ironically, in agreement with the nihilists on the response to this question. Both agree that man cannot fully commit himself in the absence of a God who is the author and guarantor of absolute certitude in the realm of values. Other religiously committed persons, however, share with many nontheistic humanists the desire to build a moral life which will give some meaning to human

existence in the absence of absolute values and absolute certainty. There would seem, therefore, to be need for an ethic which is accessible and helpful to a range of contemporary men, an ethic which will allow for diversity, even diversity of fundamental beliefs, but which will not lead to a destructive division of men into isolated, ghettoized and antagonistic groups. It will not suffice, however, to have a lowest common denominator ethic which simply notes those values on which most men agree. Rather we must create an ethic which includes the diversities in such a way that men from different cultures and traditions can so interact that the human situation is continually enriched.

Further, an ethic such as is here envisioned would even be capable of involving a plurality of religious perspectives. This will be possible, of course, only if we surrender the belief in any ethical truth as divinely revealed. This is demanded by the ethical hypothesis being advanced, since from this perspective all truth, as we have already seen, results from the reflective experience of the human community. While we cannot rule out the possibility that this reflective experience takes place within the presence of an *Other*, whom we might call God, this *Other* can never be used as a problem solver who would enable man to escape the continuing and at times painful task of honing his values out of human experience.

Another requisite for the kind of moral philosophy which is presently called for is that it must be both concrete and universal. In some way, of course, this has been the ideal of every ethic. It is clear that a concrete ethic which admits of no generalizations and transfer of insight and experience is worthless and time and effort should not be wasted in speaking or writing about it. Since, from such a perspective, every situation will be radically and totally different from every other, no guidance, direction or aid would be possible. On the other hand, a universal ethic which posits principles given once and for all and which remain essentially unaffected by their incor-

poration into a concrete situation, inevitably falls into an abstraction which is unfaithful to the experiential richness of the moral situation.

Finally, any viable ethic must acknowledge the personal, existential and hence irreducible individuality and uniqueness characterizing every moral act while at the same time accounting for and making possible an indispensable dimension of intelligence or reflection.

Pragmatism's Approach to Morality

The term *approach* is as deliberately selected here in reference to morality as it was in the previous chapter in reference to truth. In neither case is there any pretense of presenting a developed *theory*. The aim in both instances is much more modest—to suggest an approach to truth and morality which would be consistent both with a processive-relational world and with Christian faith. To say that the aim is modest is in no way to diminish the importance of the task before us. The technical refinements of a theory of truth or of morality can emerge only within a larger framework or context. The description of this context in its broad features and basic implications will be the chief concern in what follows.

The central theme of the last chapter was that the pragmatic philosophy of truth makes sense only if it is viewed within the processive-relational world presupposed by pragmatism. The underlying argument of this chapter will be that pragmatic morality also can be understood and appreciated only when it is located within such a world. This point is evident as soon as one reflects upon the "unfinished" nature of the universe which characterizes pragmatism's world view. "The world or reality," it was stated above, "is in process, in the making, and man, continuous with it, shares in the making. . . ." Man's awareness of his involvement in creating the world adds seriousness to his efforts. Conscious that the implications of his actions have sig-

nificance beyond their immediate context, man is morally energized in his day-to-day activities. It should be stressed that it is not necessary that man have full and precise knowledge of the extent to which he contributes to the "building of the earth." Further, he need have no illusions that he is the *sole* creator of this emerging world. It is sufficient for man to believe that he has a role to play and even if that role is comparatively small it is indispensable in that it results in a world that could not be exactly what it is apart from man. From the pragmatic perspective, therefore, the universe is a moral universe inasmuch as man is not an afterthought or an external addition but instead is an intrinsic component of the developing life of this universe. Man, of course, cannot whimsically simply decide what kind of world or reality there will be. Nevertheless, what he does decide and what he does do influences in some measure the course and quality of the world.

In addition to process, as we have already seen, pragmatism also insists on the fundamentally relational nature of reality or the world. As much as process, this relational feature enters into the moral philosophy of pragmatism. This relationalism excludes the isolating of "moral acts" or the radical separation of "morality" from politics, economics, religion or any sphere of experience. This is not to say that there is no legitimacy in distinguishing these different spheres or realms of experience, but to say that the distinction is functional and not ontological. It is useful and indeed indispensable to recognize a variety of activities and spheres of association but it must constantly be borne in mind that these multiple experiences overlap, interpenetrate and are ultimately grounded in a community of persons which admits of no ontological fragmentation into economic, political, artistic, religious and moral orders of being.

In stressing the pervasiveness of morality, there is no intention of advocating a superficial moralism. Admittedly, the kind of relationship being advanced between, for example, politics and morality is not easy to describe. The first step in

coming to the proper understanding of this relationship is to recognize the inadequacy of the two dominant modes of understanding. As is so often the case, the relationship of politics and morality tends to be understood in two polar forms. One maintains that politics has a life of its own and that moral considerations should be excluded from the making of moral decisions—thus the various forms of *Realpolitik*. At the other extreme are those various kinds of moralism which judge political acts on the basis of their conformity with some extrinsic principle. One example of moralism is the argument that communism is wrong and hence the United States is morally obligated to oppose it throughout the world. Another example, which though at the opposite pole of the political spectrum is still moralistic in form, is the argument that killing is wrong, hence the United States involvement in Vietnam is immoral.

Morality in the fullest and broadest sense should be viewed as human acts considered in their bearing upon the structure of society—those acts being moral to the degree that they render that structure more conducive to human life, those acts designated immoral which impede human development and lower the quality of life. When morality is approached from this perspective there can be no possibility of any “double morality” theory which would allow for something being economically, politically or artistically good but morally bad. For a variety of historical reasons it was necessary in the past to stress the autonomy of art or science or politics but the fragmenting consequences of this approach must now be overcome. The reason why science or art or politics must have a *relative* autonomy is not because they occupy or are concerned with a sphere of reality separate from the moral sphere but rather because they can make their contribution to the world—they can be *moral*—only by being faithful to the distinctive features of their mode of experience. Since, however, this mode of experience is continuous with and overlapping with other modes of experience, the results of their particularized activity influences

the world, which world in its fullness is the consequence of a variety of particular experiences. Hence, we must stop asking such questions as: Can you have good art which is morally bad? Or: Can something be economically sound and morally wrong? Or: Is it possible for an action to be politically necessary and immoral? These are false questions which lead to the multiplication of unanswerable and fruitless questions. The vital tasks confronting men are the constructing of those economic, political, educational systems and the like, which will make the greatest contribution to the development and enrichment of human life. Such efforts are moral in the fullest and richest sense of the term. Similarly, we must see artistic efforts as intimately bound up with man's moral life. It can be argued, for example, that the failure to consider the affective dimension of man in the building of cities has been immeasurably *demoralizing*.⁴

I have, needless to say, merely hinted at the relationship between morality and these diverse spheres of experience. Much remains to be done by way of specifying and detailing these relationships but the direction would now seem to be clear—away from isolating, pigeonholing and fragmenting and toward fluid interpenetration and interdependence. A moral philosophy such as pragmatism offers points in this direction. By keeping us aware of the ongoing and interrelated characteristics of all human actions, pragmatism guards against a destructive abstractionism which treats economics, politics, art and religion as if they inhabited separate worlds. The continuing point of reference, as will be developed below, is the developing life of the human community; and economics, politics, art and other kinds of activities receive their meaning, significance and worth only in relation to this life.

Pragmatism's Ethical Self as Processive

We saw above that man not only contributes to the making of the world but he also is involved in the making of himself.

The doctrine that the ethical self is brought into existence as a result of man's free acts is found in a number of existentialist thinkers from Søren Kierkegaard to Jean Paul Sartre. A variation on this position emerged independently within American philosophy not only among the pragmatists but also in the idealistic philosophy of George Holmes Howison and Josiah Royce. The distinctive feature of pragmatism's affirmation of self-creativity is that it is continuous with the processive world within which it takes place. Inasmuch as the world itself is in process of creation, those centers of experience, those focal points of activity, whom we call human selves or persons, are also in process. Again it must be stressed that this process is not merely the actualization of a pre-existing and essentially finished potential principle or soul with which the self is born. Expressed in classical language, pragmatism contends that it is the very essence or nature, individual and communal, of man which is coming into existence. Hence, those acts designated moral are not merely external and accidental expressions of a nature essentially complete in itself independently of those acts. Rather they are simultaneously the expression and creation of that self. "The self," Dewey asserts, "is not a *mere* means to producing consequences because the consequences, when of a moral kind, enter into the formation of the self and the self enters into them."⁵

It would be difficult to find anyone who would disagree with the assertion that "morality is a continuing process not a fixed achievement."⁶ Similarly, even those whose ethic is developed within a traditional mind-set would be able to reconcile their position with the following statement of Dewey's:

Except as the outcome of arrested development, there is no such thing as a fixed, ready-made, finished self. Every living self causes, acts and is itself caused in return by what it does. All voluntary action is a remaking of self, since it creates new desires, instigates to new modes of endeavor, brings to light new conditions which institute new ends. Our

personal identity is found in the thread of continuous development which binds together these changes. In the strictest sense, it is impossible for the self to stand still; it is becoming, and becoming for the better or the worse.⁷

The traditionalist in accepting the above would interpret it as acknowledging that any person is either increasing or decreasing in moral perfection. The change being affirmed, however, would be classed as accidental and would further be understood as the fulfilling of a nature which was *given* in its essential form. As for the self "becoming for the better or the worse," this would mean that insofar as the person's ethical acts move him closer to his final end he is becoming better, insofar as they move him away from this end he is becoming worse.

Pragmatism radically diverges from any process-affirmation made within some form of the classical world view. This divergence is specifically manifested in pragmatism's rejection of any final end or omega point as the goal toward which man and the world are moving. The disturbing implication of this pragmatic viewpoint is nowhere more evident than in the sphere of morality. Dewey has expressed this implication most succinctly in his highly controverted doctrine that "growth itself is the only moral 'end.'"⁸ For many this is a scandalous assertion since it seems to doom man to a treadmill morality whereby he grows and grows without really getting anywhere. It would be presumptuous for anyone to attempt to dismiss this criticism with a few words or to suggest that Dewey has completely resolved all the difficulties to which this doctrine gives rise. My concern here, however, is not with Dewey's ethics as such but rather with the possibilities which it offers to a reconstruction of morality. Let us see, therefore, how morality might be transformed by a doctrine which denies that the development of the self is toward some preordained end.

In viewing growth as "the active process of transforming the existent situation,"⁹ attention is focused and energy is directed

where they can do the most good—on the concrete situation. Instead of attempting to discover *the* final end in the light of which all acts are ultimately to be judged, pragmatic morality endeavors to find the means whereby the present situation can be bettered. In another section of this chapter I will develop a bit more fully the methodology and criterion employed by pragmatism in determining the morality of human acts. At this time, I merely wish to note that the traditional effort to discover the end or ends which exist in themselves apart from the means by which they are realized inevitably leads to a form of abstractionism which diminishes the importance of human experience. Since, from the traditional perspective, man's final end is already determined and since there are a number of other ends or goods-in-themselves, the only role for experience is to conform to these preset ends. Invariably, there then develops a dualism whereby ends are assigned to a higher order than means and the human task is simply to reduplicate this order. This dualism is further intensified when reduplication becomes restricted to the order of knowledge or to something called the "inner self" or the "spiritual world."

Pragmatism does not deny that ideals, goals and ends have a necessary role to play in the moral life of man. When they are viewed as imaginative constructions of the human community, the role they play is to aid in the transformation of man and the world. They are themselves *means* and only relatively and functionally differentiated from other means. Dewey expresses this point when he asserts that "there is no a priori standard for determining the value of a proposed solution in a concrete case. A hypothetical possible solution, as an end-in-view, is used as a methodological means to direct further observations and experiments."¹⁰ In maintaining that there is an organic continuity between means and ends, Dewey is not denying that there are relative fulfillments—consummations. There are completions of particular processes, arrival at specific goals, in short, consummatory experiences. But none of these is absolutely so

—from another perspective and in relation to another goal they are themselves instrumental, they are means.

Pragmatic morality, therefore, insists that man bring forth his ends as well as the means for achieving those ends. Since, from this perspective, there is no cessation of the processive world, there can be no final end, no final resting place. Such an interpretation of reality and man's role in the development of this is clearly at odds with what is usually understood as the Christian view of man and the world. I do not wish to minimize the opposition nor to suggest that it is easily overcome. If there is to be a reconciliation, however, it will involve a radical transformation not only of what is called "Christian morality" but even more significantly of the Christian God. I will suggest something of what such changes in our understanding of God might involve in the next chapter. It should be already evident, however, that one cannot view morality as pragmatism does while retaining a God who is immutable, fully realized and absolutely perfect. In place of a process which leads us to union with such a "finished" being, we must substitute a process which is an ongoing relationship involving man, the world and this mysterious *Other* whom we have designated God.

The process under discussion is nonlinear in the sense that it has no goal or end external to itself. Goals or ends are relative—useful, even necessary, to a particular process as a limited moment in the process of the whole. But the process of the whole has no external, already-existing end or fully realized omega point. The total process is internal to reality and self-differentiating within it; it continually brings forth novel qualities and forms of life. The construction or projection of goals is necessary to this emergence; otherwise the process stagnates or solidifies into past life forms inappropriate to the present. So far as ethical life is concerned, man must create ends as well as means. What is man's final end? The question is, from the pragmatic point of view, misleading, since it assumes a pre-existent goal (most often located in the mind of God) that men are to

discover and pursue. A better question is this: what does man want to become? It implies man's responsibility for creating himself without necessarily isolating him from God.

Pragmatism's Ethical Self as Relational

We saw above that the world of pragmatism is characterized not only by process but also by relations. It was argued that pragmatic relationalism is characterized by positing relations as constitutive of all things. Individuals, from this perspective, are the centers of activity or the foci of relational-complexes. James, it will be recalled, employed the metaphor "field" to express this concrete reality which involves a plurality of individuals but no isolated or radically separate entities. In the following passage, James describes those "fields" designated human persons:

My present field of consciousness is a centre surrounded by a fringe that shades insensibly into a subconscious more. I use three separate terms here to describe this fact; but I might as well use three hundred, for the fact is all shades and no boundaries. . . . What we conceptually identify ourselves with and say we are thinking of at any time is the centre; but our *full* self is the whole field, with all those indefinitely radiating subconscious possibilities of increase that we can only feel without conceiving, and can hardly begin to analyze. The collective and distributive ways of being coexist here, for each part functions distinctly, makes connexion with its own peculiar region in the still wider rest of experience and tends to draw us into that line, and yet the whole is somehow felt as one pulse of our life,—not conceived so, but felt so. . . . Every bit of us at every moment is part and parcel of a wider self, it quivers along various radii like the wind-rose on a compass, and the actual in it is continuously one with possibles not yet in our present sight.¹¹

Dewey's doctrine of the self as relational is particularly in evidence in his extended consideration of the category of "the social."¹² Dewey asserts that "all human experience is ultimately social"¹³ but if one is to avoid misunderstanding this, it must be seen as a specific manifestation of the broader principle "that associated or conjoint behavior is a universal characteristic of all existences."¹⁴ All existences involve associations and relations but not to the same extent. The term "social" is used to designate those phenomena which exemplify "the widest and most intricate scale of the generic traits of associated behavior or interaction."¹⁵ The social, in the human sense, then, is but one type of association—"the richest, fullest and most delicately subtle of any mode actually experienced."¹⁶ At the same time, the social so understood is "continuous with and inclusive of the categories of the physical, vital and mental."¹⁷

An important feature of Dewey's category of the social is that it acknowledges the distinctively human context of moral acts while not isolating them from other modes of association which are comprised in reality. This is neither a "layer-cake" image of reality nor a mode of reductionism, however, since the human context both includes and transforms the physical, vital and mental phenomena. These later take on "new properties and exercise new functions" when incorporated within the human or social mode of association.¹⁸ Any ethics or theory of morality developed within such a metaphysics cannot ignore the physical, vital and mental relations which constitute the human self. More important, however, the distinctive task of such an ethics is to determine just how the human context transforms these relations. Hence, the data supplied by such sciences as physics, biology, psychology and sociology cannot be mechanically utilized as a solution to specifically human problems. Such data are indispensable for an understanding of man's moral life but the distinctive transformations and implications of these data when they are an organic component of a human situation must be grasped by the moral philosopher.¹⁹ Only

then will the ethician be capable of constructing hypotheses or plans of action which will respect and take account of the full range of human reality rather than some abstract or isolated aspect of man.²⁰

In stressing the centrality of the social in the thought of Dewey, the impression should not be given that the individual receives a subordinate or diminished role.²¹ On the contrary, it can be argued that no one has been more fervent in his effort to safeguard that uniqueness, spontaneity and creativity which distinguishes individuality. Dewey's long and impassioned polemic against any monism or absolute idealism can stand as eloquent testimony of this effort. Actually, as in so many instances, Dewey bypasses a classical philosophical problem by rejecting the terms in which it has been traditionally considered. In this instance, as Sidney Hook points out, Dewey "refuses to recognize any validity in the timeworn opposition between *the* social and *the* individual. . . . There is no mind, there is no individual, that measures itself as an independent entity over against society."²²

Pragmatism insists that we break the mental habit of reifying *either* the individual or the society. They are not entities, things-in-themselves with only an incidental or accidental relation to each other. They have reality only as distinct expressions of a common "field" which might properly be designated individual-social. Individuals and societies have reality only in relation, and the tendency to treat them as if they had some intrinsic reality apart from each other has led to a host of insoluble moral problems. Pragmatism has no illusions that by affirming the organic relation between individuals and society it has thereby solved the numerous concrete problems surrounding individuals and society. It does maintain, however, that it has grasped the conditions within which these problems are to be handled and that these conditions transform both the problems and our manner of handling them. Of course, there can be no once-and-for-all resolution of these problems,²³ and

much wasted energy has gone into trying to achieve such "eternal" solutions.

For an example of the way in which the pragmatic perspective transforms our approach to moral problems, consider the classical controversy concerning the rights of the individual versus the rights of society. As long as one continues to think in terms of individual men fully structured in themselves who then enter into relationships with other men in order to form a community or society, there will be a tendency to resolve this question either in the direction of destructive individualism or a destructive collectivism. When, however, we recognize that the human person is essentially communal, that in a sense the person is the individualized focus or expression of the community, that, paradoxically, we can achieve individuality only by greater participation in communities, then at least we are aware that any either-or resolution is unacceptable.

In addition, the perspective of both the individual and the community will be transformed. The individual person becomes obligated to attempt to determine whether or not his actions respect his varied relationships and are thereby in keeping with the best and deepest ideals of the community or communities by which he is continually being formed. On the other hand, the community must ever be on guard against betraying itself in the direction of a choking uniformity through a failure to recognize its most insightful and farseeing representatives—those who contribute so significantly to its life and formation. The role of the prophet seems to illustrate this paradox. The prophet, assuming that he is not a false prophet, is not an egotistical rugged individualist who places himself in neurotic opposition to the community. Rather he is the one who at a particular moment in history is the best expression of the community inasmuch as he illuminates the community's self-betrayal and urges it to be faithful to those ideals which give the community its meaning and identity.

By viewing all moral problems as involving an organic dia-

lectic between the individual and communal aspects or reality, pragmatism avoids any moral quantification which attempts to draw some line between individual and social rights or obligations. While pragmatism distinguishes the private from the public, this is a functional distinction which does not presuppose that there is some private order with its own mode of reality and laws. Paradoxically, the recognition of "the private" or "the individual" takes place within society and is the fruit of a highly developed society. This point is expressed by Dewey in a passage which manifests remarkable historical insight:

By historic fallacy we often suppose, or imagine that we suppose, that the individual had been present as a possible center of action all through the Middle Ages, but through some external and arbitrary interference has been weighted down by political and intellectual despotism. The very possibility of the individual making such unlimited demands for himself, claiming to be the legitimate center of all action and standard for all organization, was dependent, . . . upon the intervening medievalism. Save as having passed through this period of tremendous discipline, and having gradually worked over into his own habits and purposes the truths embodied in the church and state that controlled his conduct, the individual could be only a source of disorder and a disturber of civilization.²⁴

There can be no question, therefore, of downgrading or diminishing the importance of either society or the individual.²⁵ Since, however, we live in an ever-changing world, it is imperative that we develop an "individualism" suitable to such a world and not one based on the assumption of the existence of some absolutely unchanging essences. Of this latter viewpoint, Dewey would say that it "treats individualism as if it were something static, having a uniform content. It ignores the fact that the mental and moral structure of individuals, the pattern of their desires and purposes, change with every great

change in social constitution."²⁶ That is why Dewey felt that the "deepest problem of our times" was "the constructing of a new individuality consonant with the objective conditions under which we live."²⁷

Dewey was respectful of the contributions of an earlier individualism and of the romantic emphasis upon the "inner life" but he refused to accept them as adequate for our present needs. Though Dewey's views on the crisis of individuality were formulated over forty years ago, they sound as if they had been lifted from the rhetoric of current student revolutionaries. Individuals are "lost," Dewey said, because "the beliefs and ideals that are uppermost in their consciousness are not relevant to the society in which they outwardly act and which constantly reacts upon them. . . . Individuals will refind themselves only as their ideas and ideals are brought into harmony with the realities of the age in which they act."²⁸

What distinguishes Dewey from many of our contemporary social critics and what is positively indispensable for any pragmatic reconstruction of morality is the recognition that individuality is not achieved over against or in isolation from society but only in the transformation of society. We will not bring about a significant bettering of our contemporary situation by simplistic critiques of society and emotional songs of praise for the individual. The fundamental prerequisite for any authentic personalism "is realization of the collective age we have already entered."²⁹ The major flaw in the present situation, however, is that the "collectivity" or "corporateness" of our time is to a great extent external to the individual. Only when it becomes internalized, that is, when it is realized in thought and purpose, will it become qualitative. "In this change, law will be realized not as a rule arbitrarily imposed from without but as the relations which hold individuals together. The balance of the individual and the social will be organic."³⁰ If we are to take seriously such an understanding of law, it will be necessary to make laws which are capable of being internalized and to dis-

card those which are not. A test of the internalization potential of a law would be the extent to which its formation and application involves participation on the part of those it is intended to serve.

It is clear, therefore, that if we are concerned with developing moral individuals, we cannot avoid the task of forming societies which will enable them to emerge. Against this background of the organic relation between individual and society, politics, social action, education, religion, science and technology take on new importance and significance. Each of these activities plays indispensable roles in the constitution and development of the individual person.³¹ Thus the moral self cannot be produced by some isolated act of will or "inner experience." There are no shortcuts to personal individuality and there are no privileged or exclusive pathways to it. While at any moment some members of society will achieve a more distinct and richer quality of individuality, the difference among individuals of a society can only be one of degree. Even the greatest of individuals will be bound by the limitations and quality of life of their society. As examples of this cultural limitation, one need only cite such individuals as Aristotle, Augustine and Lincoln, each of whom held some views which would be considered almost barbaric by present standards. Even more than in the past, however, and as a result of the great technological and communications revolutions, men's individual destinies are bound up with each other. Only by radically reconstructing the various societies in which we live through the creation of new and more adequate social modes can we hope to bring about a richer quality of individuality.

Pragmatism's Criterion of Morality

It should be evident from what was presented in the last chapter that the pragmatic approach to morality follows very closely the pragmatic approach to truth. In both instances, as

James might say, "the essential thing is the process of being guided."³² Ultimately the terms "true" and "good" express something about some concrete situation, namely that the relationships which compose this situation are, and are judged, "satisfactory." Hence, the distinction between true and good is nominal rather than ontological. The reason or justification for making the distinction is functional; that is, the distinction serves the function of focusing our attention upon different aspects of our experience, thereby enabling us to refine and enrich this experience. Truth considerations might be said to be characterized by the centering of attention upon our ideas, beliefs and symbols insofar as they lead us to satisfactory, or more satisfactory, relations. Moral considerations, on the other hand, center our attention upon our *actions* insofar as their consequences render our situation satisfactory or more satisfactory.³³

The similarity of the approaches to truth and morality is strikingly evident in the fundamental sameness of pragmatism's verification and valuation processes. Just as in the case of truth, actions are judged moral or good to the extent to which they enhance the "quality of life" of the human community and the persons who compose this community. Expressed somewhat differently, we might say that good actions are those whose consequences transform unsatisfactory situations into satisfactory ones or relatively satisfactory into more satisfactory situations. There are four central operative factors in pragmatism's verification and valuation processes—"quality of life," "human community," "consequences" and "satisfactoriness." Each of these terms has a vagueness and ambiguity about it which leads many critics to consider it worthless for the purposes of our moral life. I have already acknowledged the difficulties to which the first three of these factors give rise but it might be helpful to briefly re-emphasize a few points with specific reference to morality. In a later section, the fourth factor, "satisfactoriness," will be considered.

The controlling principle or assumption of any pragmatic ethic is that there is no necessity for "going beyond" human experience in order to ground morality. Though it is not usually expressed as such, I would maintain that there is a necessary phenomenological dimension to any pragmatic ethic. The primary or ultimate value of life, for example, is grasped immediately and irreducibly in that it is not justified in terms of some more basic or ultimate value. Further, every life, indeed every "situation has its unique pervasive quality which binds its constituents into a single whole."³⁴ Richard Bernstein has highlighted the originality and centrality of Dewey's treatment of quality, which doctrine, I believe, has a particular significance for morality. Qualities, according to Dewey, are directly experienced, hence they can be *had* but not *known*. This means that there is no possibility of defining qualities in terms of abstract concepts. We can be made aware of qualities, therefore, only by a kind of philosophical pointing—a phenomenological description if you prefer. Dewey gives us an excellent example of such a description in the following:

A painting is said to have quality, or a particular painting to have a Titian or Rembrandt quality. The word thus used most certainly does not refer to any particular line, color or part of the painting. It modifies all the constituents of the picture and all of their relations. It is not anything that can be expressed in words for it is something that must be *had*. Discourse may, however, point out the qualities, lines and relations by means of which pervasive and unifying quality is achieved.³⁵

The phrase "quality of life," therefore, does not refer to some "transcendent norm" or abstract reality in reference to which specific actions are judged good or bad. Every life whether considered from its personal or communal perspective has at every moment of its existence a quality which pervades it. The judgment that the quality of life of one person or community is

better than the quality of life of another person or community is always a comparative judgment. Pragmatism thereby rejects the classical assumption that there must exist a transcendent or absolute "best" in relationship to which one life is judged better than another. "Quality of life," therefore, is not an abstract standard which is to be sought and discovered apart from experience. Rather it is an existential feature of every community and it emerges as the "consequence" of a variety of factors. I will mention but three crucial ones and briefly indicate the basis for judging the "quality of life" which ensues. First, an economic system which results in people being fed, housed and clothed is better than one which does not. Second, an educational system which results in people being able to understand science, appreciate art, literature and the like is better than one which closes people off from these goods. Finally, a religion which heightens man's sense of reverence for life and stimulates him to develop the resources of the world and to serve his fellow man, is better than one which leads to exclusiveness and destruction.

As in the case of truth, there is a sense in which the human community is the criterion of good. Those actions whose consequences enhance the well-being of the human community are actions which can properly be called good. Again, however, it must be noted that stated so simply, this pragmatic criterion of good is quite misleading. Recall the earlier statement that "*the* human community is still in a very real sense an ideal, a project, a task—it is what we believe should be created and that which, hopefully, we are creating." At the moment, therefore, it is more accurate to speak of many human communities rather than one. This, needless to say, presents a problem for any pragmatic morality, for it would seem that consequences which might be good for one community might be bad for another. Given a static view of reality and morality, such a conflict would be definitively destructive. But in a world in the making, a world in which goodness is being progressively

achieved, such a conflict indicates that what at first appeared good was not truly so or was so in a restricted manner which is no longer satisfactory. If it be objected that we can only learn this after the painful consequences manifest themselves, pragmatism can only agree. It is the contention of pragmatism that there is no definitive, once-and-for-all a priori moral philosophy, which informs us with absolute certitude and before we act of what is right and what is wrong. We must continually modify our actions in the light of their consequences. This means that in hypothesizing on how we should act or what we should do we must have considered as far as possible what consequences will follow not only for our immediate person or community, but for all persons and for the human community.

It is evident, therefore, that only a moral philosophy which is willing to be constantly open to the modification of its value judgments will be congenial to a man and world which is ever-changing and coming into being. The alternative is some form of ethical rationalism which insists on defending its judgments without regard to the changing human situation. While pragmatic morality rejects any rationalistic approach to morality, it also rejects any suggestion that it is a form of irrationalism. As indicated in the first chapter, pragmatic empiricism transforms the role of reason, it does not exclude it. Thus, reason, or, better, rational or intelligent activity is itself a mode of experience—one which gives direction and guidance to man's life. A classical stumbling block to experiential moral philosophies is the distinction between *is* and *ought*. Experience, it is argued, can describe what *is* but it cannot tell us what *ought* to be done since there is no possibility of deducing an *ought* from an *is*. This leads many philosophers to conclude that there must be a rational method essentially independent of experience by means of which man discovers what he *ought* to do even if he never has and never will actually do it. I would argue that a pragmatic approach does not *solve* this

problem but that it significantly transforms it. When reality is viewed as processive, the *is* can only be a description of how things are at present. The *ought*, then, is our hypothesis (combining guess and hope) as to how we might best change the *is*. Hence, *ought* is a future-oriented category and is derived from and depends upon just what kind of world we want to exist. Our creative acts have moral dimension insofar as they are the means by which the world which *ought* to be is brought into existence out of the world which *is*. Pragmatism avoids dreamy or utopian hypothesizing about the *ought* because it recognizes that it can posit a significant and possible *ought* only by taking full account of what *is*. In the jargon of the day, pragmatism makes the fullest effort to discover "where it's at." It knows, however, that one cannot really know "where it's at" unless one also knows something of "where it's been." Further, it contends that significant meaning can be attached to "where it's at" only if we are willing to conjecture as to "where it *ought* to be."

There is a fundamental activity of self-correction which is central to any worth-while pragmatic morality but is usually overlooked by its critics. It is too seldom noted that immediately after James described "*the right*" as "*only the expedient in the way of behaving*," he went on to say:

Expedient in almost any fashion; and expedient in the long run and on the whole of course; for what meets expediently all the experience in sight won't necessarily meet all farther experiences equally satisfactorily. Experience, as we know, has ways of *boiling over*, and making us correct our present formulas.³⁶

For many, pragmatic morality is morally bankrupt, is almost a contradiction in terms, and by its own admission. The admission which leads to this conclusion is that pragmatism can give no answers or solutions, in the usually understood sense of these terms, to specific moral problems. If one is convinced

that the giving of such answers is the task of moral philosophy, then by all means pragmatism should be avoided for it will prove most frustrating and disappointing. On the other hand, the pragmatic approach to morality might be of service to "man come of age," for whom there can be no question of receiving uncritically any fully realized values or moral principles, whether from science, philosophy, the government, the Church or even from God. It must be conceded, then, that pragmatic moral philosophy is by definition tentative, hypothetical and experimental. This does not, as I will stress below, excuse it from rendering concrete judgments. The fear that pragmatism means "anything goes" is misplaced—it arises from an unwillingness to move beyond the popular understanding that reduces pragmatism to a few statements taken out of context and expressed in the form of crass utilitarian slogans.

Pragmatism's Account of Values

A common objection to pragmatism is that it fails to account for or to ground values. Whether or not pragmatism adequately accounts for values is, of course, arguable; but that the grounding of values was a central concern of pragmatism, particularly as developed by Dewey, is beyond dispute. Dewey repeatedly observed that contemporary life is characterized by a profound split between values, ideals and moral ends and the existential conditions in which man finds himself. Needless to say, from Dewey's perspective, the dichotomy between the "world of facts" and the "world of values" is the result of historical and cultural factors and not an ontological division or one rooted in nature. It was for this reason that he contended that "the problem of restoring integration and cooperation between man's beliefs about the world in which he lives and his beliefs about the values and purposes that should direct his conduct

is the deepest problem of modern life. It is the problem of any philosophy that is not isolated from that life."³⁷

Throughout his works, Dewey gives a sustained and devastating critique of absolutes. At the same time, it might be argued that his primary purpose was not to overthrow traditional or fundamental values but rather to make them more widely accessible, to render them operative in daily living rather than allow them to be pushed to the periphery of life, to render them existential and influential rather than abstract and irrelevant—in short, progressively to incarnate them.³⁸

Pragmatism, of course, cannot admit of a realm of values having their reality and meaning independent of human experience. The only values which pragmatism recognizes are those rooted in experience and continuous with nature. Values are just as real and every bit as constitutive of nature as molecules or chemicals. They are modes of reality expressing particular types of relations which give both quality and direction to life. If, for example, we say love and justice are values, we are acknowledging the reality of relationships which are distinctive ways of acting and which are permeated by distinct qualities.

Since pragmatism describes values in terms of human relationships, it is often alleged that it is a form of subjectivism. Both James and Dewey vigorously rejected subjectivism³⁹ but there is no doubt that their description of good as that which is satisfactory has misled many people. Though I think that a close reading of James would show that he does not really make personal satisfaction in the restricted sense the criterion of goodness, it is Dewey who explicitly and unequivocally rejects any such doctrine.⁴⁰ Dewey lays the groundwork for an objective, though not an objectivistic, ethic in his frequently expressed distinction between "the enjoyed and the enjoyable," between "prizing and appraising," and between the "ideas of 'satisfying' and 'satisfactory.'"⁴¹ According to Dewey, "most so-called self-deception is due to employing immediate organic

states as the criteria of the value of an act. To say that it feels good or yields direct satisfaction is to say that it gives rise to a comfortable internal state."⁴² Dewey is here distinguishing between an action or the object of an action which makes me "feel good," which I "enjoy" or find "satisfying" and an action or object which is "objectively" good. "To say that something satisfies is to report something as isolated finality. To assert that it is *satisfactory* is to define it in its connections and interactions."⁴³ Liking, desiring, enjoying, therefore, do not settle the question of value—they simply initiate it. Granted that a particular action or object satisfies me, I must then seek to determine whether it is "satisfactory," whether it is valuable. Hence those things which are "prized" must be "appraised" before I know whether they are values in the proper or objective sense of the term.⁴⁴ Only through a reflective process of evaluation, therefore, can we arrive at what is truly good rather than what simply seems good. Hence Dewey is led to assert:

"Good" to the child signifies that which tastes good; that which satisfies an immediate craving. "Good" from the standpoint of the more experienced person is that which serves certain ends, that which stands in certain connections with consequences. Judgment of value is the name of the act which searches for and takes into consideration these connections.⁴⁵

Bearing in mind the processive and relational world presupposed by pragmatism, it is now possible to suggest a reconstructed meaning of "objective morality." First, from the relational aspect, *objective* can be described and determined on the basis of the relationships which it includes. The more extensive the consideration of relations, the more objective the morality; the more restricted the consideration of relations, the more subjective the morality. Since subjective and objective, as we saw above, do not represent static or isolated entities

or orders of being, the distinction is functional and the difference is one of degree. Hence, to say that we should endeavor to be objective in our moral life is not to say that we should strive to conform to some ontological realm of values existing essentially independent of human subjects. Rather it is an invitation to expand the life of the human subject by including wider and more varied relationships. Instead, then, of allowing our "feelings" to determine our actions without regard to surrounding conditions or relationships, we should strive to have our feelings determined by as full an involvement as possible in the multiple conditions and relations which compose reality.

The relational dimension of *objective* must be combined with the processive dimension in order to appreciate the fundamental reconstruction which pragmatism initiates here. We have already noted that Dewey suggested that we substitute the terms *effective* or *directive* for that of *objective*, and *futile* or *misleading* for that of *subjective*. It is in man's moral life that such a substitution would be particularly beneficial. Actions would be designated objectively good insofar as they were effective in directing us to overcome an unsatisfactory situation or to render a relatively satisfactory situation more satisfactory. On the other hand, actions which are futile or misleading in our efforts to transform a situation would be labeled subjective.

It should now be evident that though pragmatism denies the existence of "absolute values," it does acknowledge the reality of values, even "objective" values. It avoids, however, either affirming or denying, a priori, any particular values. Pragmatism does allow and indeed insists on the *need* for values, even universal and enduring values; but it insists that these must continually be constructed and evaluated in terms of the complex and changing experience of the community. It is the complexity and instability of the concrete situation which tempt men to resolve moral problems abstractly in terms of absolutes. Since it is not possible to consider *all* the ever-changing factors involved in any existential situation, many

thinkers believe that the only way to avoid a destructive relativism and moral skepticism is by isolating some general principles or values which allegedly remain the same, fundamentally untouched by the changing context in which they operate.

Pragmatism can acknowledge a role for both general principles and universal values, though neither can be affirmed as absolutes. The role of principles in pragmatic moral philosophy will be touched upon in a later section; in this section, the pragmatic position will be expressed in terms of values. Values can be affirmed as universal and relatively permanent on the basis of the quality of life which their pursuit and exercise continually bring forth. Experience teaches us that many values present themselves with such force that they appear to be irreducible, sought for their own sake, or, as they are usually described, absolute. An alternative hypothesis might suggest that values came into existence as the result of long community experience, and that their continuing salutary consequences for the good of the individual and the community have burned them into the collective consciousness. Admittedly, such a grand hypothesis is not easy to verify. Actually, I doubt whether or not there will ever be any absolutely compelling evidence for either the absolutistic or the pragmatic hypothesis concerning certain basic values. The advantage of the pragmatic hypothesis is that it takes cognizance of those dimensions of universality and permanence which undoubtedly are aspects of the ethical life, while at the same time it is faithful to the processive and relational features of the human situation. Further, by asserting the organic continuity of man and his moral life, this hypothesis is able to allow for the possibility of values emerging which signify an irreversible thrust to human life. Such values might become so embedded in the human community—not merely a stem of the community—that they will last as long as man.⁴⁶

While pragmatism, then, can concede that some values acquire a kind of permanence and universality, it would still

maintain that we cannot have absolute certainty about such values, that is, they can have no privileged position of being beyond review and criticism. No values, from this perspective, are ever privileged in the sense of being protected from critical scrutiny and reinterpretation on the basis of developing thought and experience. All values must continually be capable of "making their way" in the human community. If there are some values which can now be called universal and permanent, then we should be capable of showing here and now why they are so, and not be content with merely asserting them as such. I would like to stress that we can still believe that certain values are those after which man should fashion himself. If we so believe, however, we must have the courage of our beliefs and be willing to dedicate our lives to the realization of such values even in the absence of any absolute certainty concerning them.

Pragmatism's Decision-making Process

Inasmuch as the values which emerge in reality will depend to a great extent upon the decisions which men make, the decision-making process plays a central role in the moral life of men. The task of refining and developing this process is shared by a number of institutions among which the most significant are the family, the school and the Church. Moral philosophy also has an important role to play here for it is responsible for heightening man's awareness of his decision-making power and also for calling his attention to the various factors which enter into the process of making decisions. Let me indicate in the briefest fashion something of what, from a pragmatic perspective, is involved in decision-making.

Pragmatism assumes that the person who makes decisions is a relational self and a processively creative center of activity. Further, both this self and its relations or world are not complete but in the making: both myself and my world are

made in part at least by my decisions. My decisions modify me and they modify my world, even as my world, which constitutes my being, modifies me and my decisions. The human person and his decisions are, on the one hand, determined by the world to which he is related while, on the other, the human person and his decisions determine the world.

Since, in relation to their environment, human selves manifest spontaneity, originality, "selectivity of reaction" and creative initiative, they can properly be said to be free. "Freedom," Dewey tells us, "has too long been thought of as an indeterminate power operating in a closed and ended world. In its reality, freedom is a resolute will operating in a world in some respects indeterminate, because open and moving toward a new future."⁴⁷

Correlative with human freedom is human responsibility—freedom obligates one to accept responsibility for the consequences of one's decisions and actions while responsibility is possible only insofar as one is free. "One is held responsible," according to Dewey, "in order that he may *become* responsible, that is responsible to the needs and claims of others, to the obligations implicit in his position." He goes on to say that both freedom and responsibility in the practical and moral sense are "connected with possibility of growth, learning and modification of character."⁴⁸ What is evident in texts such as these is that neither freedom nor responsibility can be attributed to some completed and essentially formed inner power called the will. They *are* only to the extent that they are being processively realized through the ongoing activity of persons. Since these persons can neither be nor act apart from a variety of social institutions, freedom and responsibility can emerge and develop only insofar as these institutions are oriented toward producing them. That is why any theory of freedom which assigns it to the "spiritual realm" or the "inner life" is inadequate from the pragmatist's point of view. Men will increase in freedom only through their familial, political, edu-

cational and religious institutions. The ability to make decisions, therefore, depends upon the creation of institutions which not only allow for decisions but make them a necessary part of the life of those institutions.⁴⁹

A traditional way of explaining the moral decision-making process is as an exercise of conscience. The many differences which pragmatism has with the traditional definitions of conscience cannot be entered into here. It is enough to say that pragmatism rejects any understanding of conscience as "a separate non-natural faculty of moral knowledge."⁵⁰ For our purposes, it will suffice to describe conscience as the human self considered under the aspect of directing the self's activity in that region of life or those activities designated "moral."⁵¹ Within pragmatism's world, of course, there can be no conscience in a vacuum, no isolated individual conscience any more than there can be an isolated moral order. The ethical self, as has already been stressed, is constituted by a variety of relationships. In similar fashion a conscience emerges and takes on its distinctive form only within and by means of a set of relationships which are constantly shifting, some slowly and imperceptibly, others rapidly and radically. Hence, conscience cannot be grasped or discussed apart from the culture and society in which the individual person exists.

The earliest and in many respects the most fundamental formation of conscience can be called "nonreflective." It is a formation that comes about through processes involving cultural relations, familial relations, religious relations and numerous other individual and communal relationships. An important dimension of this nonreflective conscience is expressed by the distinguished philosopher of science, Henry Margenau, when he describes conscience as "the instinctive residue in man's mind of the results of the ethical experimentation of the race through history."⁵² Important and fundamental as this non-reflective aspect of conscience is, I think it equally important to distinguish this inherited or received dimension of conscience

from that which results from our conscious reflective activity. In attempting to "form our conscience," we are confronted with a twofold task. Our first task in forming our conscience is to be as aware as possible of the parental, cultural, religious and other relationships which have fashioned us. Secondly, however, we must attempt to evaluate these factors and the formation which they have produced. Such evaluation is a life-long process and can never be done mechanically. The fact that we have originally accepted values or goals or articles of faith unreflectively is not in itself destructive—indeed it is necessary; but to the extent to which we achieve a certain level of reflection—a degree of maturity—we must evaluate them and eventually affirm them, reject them or modify them.

A highly controverted question in ethics is the existence, nature and role of absolute moral principles. Pragmatism's response to this question is more complicated than is generally believed but it is firm in its rejection of any strictly "absolute" principles—there cannot be even one value or principle which can be used as a norm to evaluate or render good an ethical act apart from the consideration of other factors and relations which enter into the constitution of that act. Pragmatism allows for no absolutely *a priori* judgments, even one which says, "love only is always good."⁵³ Any "situation ethics" which retains "love" as an absolute, compromises its situationism in favor of a "love absolutism." While not diminishing the role of love in man's moral life, a pragmatist would argue that the consequences of love are *not* always good. Consider, for example, the love of parents for their children or the love of the patriot for his country or the love of an Othello for a Desdemona. Would anyone suggest that every consequence which has stemmed from such loves has been good? If the objection is raised that the acts from which harmful consequences proceeded were not truly acts of love, then the utility of "love" as an antecedent norm or standard for decision-making is destroyed. Nowhere is self-deception more

likely than in the experience of love. Certainly the mother who consumes her child through possessiveness firmly believes that she is acting through love. In like fashion, the patriot claims to love when he says, "My country, right or wrong" (someone has referred to nationalism as a "love that hates"). Hence, pragmatism concludes that love is itself situational or contextual—that love is but one of a variety of factors or relations which must be considered in any concrete act of deciding.

In rejecting absolute principles, pragmatism does not thereby deny a role for principles, principles which can properly be designated "general." "Principles," according to Dewey, "exist as hypotheses with which to experiment. Human history is long. There is a long record of past experimentation in conduct, and there are cumulative verifications which give many principles a well earned prestige. Lightly to disregard them is the height of foolishness."⁵⁴ Such principles play an important and indispensable role in decision-making but they never in themselves resolve the morality of a concrete situation. Further, these principles do not have any reality apart from experience. Rather they "are empirical generalizations from the ways in which previous judgments of conduct have practically worked out."⁵⁵ Since experience teaches us that there are striking similarities to be found among various moral situations, and since experience is intellectually cumulative, principles can give great assistance in the effort to resolve particular questions. The error, as far as pragmatism is concerned, is not in the formulation and utilization of general principles but in the tendency to forget their experiential origin and thereby transform them into fixed and rigid absolutes.⁵⁶

The human decision-making processes can greatly benefit from moral philosophy and moral theory. Such deliberate efforts can contribute to man's understanding of the possibilities and limitations which characterize the human situation and also construct ethical hypotheses and form general principles through

reflecting on cumulative human experience. These hypotheses and principles can serve as guidelines for human actions and play a crucial role in making any specific decision. Finally, moral philosophy can attend to the consequences which result from acting upon these hypotheses and principles and develop or modify them appropriately. The pragmatic approach to decision-making, therefore, attaches a great deal of weight to reflection and to those formal modes of reflection which we designate philosophy and science. Nevertheless, pragmatism affirms an irreducible existential dimension in moral life in that it insists that only an individual person can make a concrete moral decision. Ethical persons may and should seek and accept whatever guidance and illumination they can receive from a variety of sources, but what they can never do is permit their decisions to be made for them, whether by the philosopher, the theologian, the scientist, the politician or the churchman.

The reflective person recognizes that the various relationships which constitute his being—relationships to the world, to his family, to his culture, to his fellow men, to his religious community, to his God—have a crucial bearing upon the human decision-making process. He knows that in making his moral decisions he must be as faithful as possible to the *totality* of his person and that he must avoid centering attention upon one aspect of his moral self, in isolation from other aspects. Further, the morally aware person acknowledges that not all the relationships which constitute his personal life are equally important and determining of the morality of a particular moral act. The weighing and evaluation of the diversity of relationships, and the claims and values which these relationships express, are actually the crux of the decision-making process which distinguishes the human person.

While this process of making moral decisions is not easy either to describe or to perform, it is easily caricatured as an excuse for following one's whims. It must be stressed, however, that in asserting the complexity, the fluidity and the multi-

relational characteristic of the moral situation, pragmatism does not intend this as a dodge or an excuse for the failure to take a moral stand in concrete situations. The primary thrust of pragmatic moral philosophy might be expressed by stating that while we can have no absolute certainty as regards the morality of our acts, nevertheless we must reflect, decide and act. Even the most exhaustive listing of relevant relationships and processes will not in itself result in an ethical decision. Hence, there can be no substitute for that personal response which must always be tinged with a degree of tentativeness and permeated by a kind of faith. Such an admission appears to many to reduce pragmatism to a tepid, mealy-mouthed form of morality.

It must be admitted that from the earliest moments of history men have seemed capable of being ethically "turned on" only by isolating one or a few factors in a situation and giving them an aura of sacredness and certainty which demand absolute and unyielding commitment. This absolutism and dogmatism are in widespread evidence at the present time. On the other hand, there is no question that there is also an intellectualism—an excessive centering of attention upon the complexity of any concrete situation—which leads to a moral flabbiness, neutralism and passivism. Without moral commitment, and fervid moral commitment, men are not likely to measure up to the formidable task which confronts them. The question, which is not an abstract question but which bears upon human life and death, however, is whether or not men can summon the moral energy which stems from personal commitment without falling prey to fanaticism. Some will insist that a degree of fanaticism, of moral single-mindedness, is necessary in order to bring about the necessary changes in society. Pragmatism, on the other hand, suggests that mankind is better served by reflective men who attend to as many relationships and processes in a situation as they possibly can, who evaluate the relative weight and importance of these factors as best they can, who have the courage to decide and act while remaining

open to the discovery of new factors, and finally, who at all times are willing to review their judgments, commitments and actions in the light of ongoing experience.

Pragmatic Morality and Religion

It should be evident from what has preceded that the ethics or moral philosophy which is being proposed could not properly be called Catholic⁶⁷ or Christian in the commonly accepted use of those terms. Hopefully, however, it would be moving in the direction of a universal human ethics. This means that it would be the fruit of continual efforts by all reflective men who are concerned for the good of mankind. The insistence of pragmatism that a universal human ethics should be a task shared by all reflective men is not to be interpreted as calling for some kind of monolithic moral philosophy. While there undoubtedly will emerge a number of values which are and should be universally affirmed, it is neither possible nor desirable that they be particularized in identical forms in every moral situation. Further, since a central aspect of any pragmatic approach to morality is the creation of ethical hypotheses which are to be acted upon, verified, rejected or modified, the distinctive personal, cultural and religious dimensions of the one doing the hypothesizing will of necessity influence this process. Hence, while two persons, a secular humanist and a Roman Catholic for example, might both be pragmatists, the moral philosophy which they produce would be determined in part by their differing personal experiences, differing community experiences, differing ideals and beliefs, differing historical traditions and, finally, by the differing faiths and visions which undergird and give direction to all aspects of their respective lives. In reference to such factors as these, two opposing mistakes are likely to be made. One mistake is to deny that such factors should enter into an ethics which claims to be universal rather than parochial. The other error is to attempt to demonstrate the presence of

these factors by means of specifically different moral principles or different resolutions to concrete moral problems. The important feature of any moral philosophy which makes a claim to being pragmatic is not that its conclusions either agree or disagree with other pragmatic moral philosophers. Rather, it is the willingness to reach those conclusions on the basis of reflective experience and to continually evaluate and re-evaluate those conclusions in terms of their service to the human community. Pragmatism's approach to morality, then, allows for a diversity of religious perspectives—it does not allow, however, for any one of these to be considered privileged. Religious communities are encouraged to bring their moral insights or values before the human community and to try to persuade other men of their "rightness." They must attempt to persuade, however, on the basis of reasoned argument and, this failing, they cannot ask acceptance of these values even by their own members on the basis of some mysterious principle or principles (revelation, grace, faith or the like) which come from outside experience.

Most, if not all, Christian communities make some kind of privileged claim of moral insight and Roman Catholicism is no exception. There is a certain irony here, however, since the Roman Catholic tradition has also stressed the need for a universal ethics which could and ought to be affirmed by all rational men. At the same time, Roman Catholics have tended to compromise this universal ethics supposedly available to all reflective men. I believe that there are three basic reasons why the Roman Catholic's effort to bring forth a universal ethics has met with such little success in the contemporary world.

The first reason is that Catholics have retained a restrictive and static view of nature and reason long after such a view was serviceable for thought and experience. Thus Catholic moralists fell into a form of moral rationalism by presupposing the existence of an essentially finished human nature and a rational power capable of determining absolutely, once and for

all, and independently of context or situation, that some human acts are in conflict with that nature and hence intrinsically evil. Secondly, Catholics have consistently, at least until quite recently, refused to enter with open minds into dialogue with other men in an effort to discover what really is for the common good. Catholics have insisted that other men meet them only on their terms and within their categories. While insisting that they were open-minded, they were actually in a form of "bad faith" or "self-deception," since they simultaneously claimed to be absolutely certain of the conclusions at which all right-thinking men should arrive. Finally, Catholics have been guilty of introducing an alleged "supernatural" element into the argument when they have been unable to persuade through reasoning.

The dominant Roman Catholic treatment of contraception might be cited as an illustration of each of these three points. For a long period Catholics maintained that the use of contraceptives was a violation of human nature and any man of good will and reason should recognize this. In any discussion of the morality of contraception, the Catholic participant not only explained away any new evidence, whether demographical, biological or philosophical, but also denied the possibility of any evidence emerging in the future which would modify his position. When it became apparent that even many Catholics were not persuaded by the argument from "reason," there was a shifting of ground which led to the claim that the immorality of contraception was universally taught by the Church and hence could only be recognized and must be accepted by an act of faith. Thus Catholics found themselves in the unenviable position of asserting that reason could discover the immorality of contraception but that only those graced with faith could recognize this "truth of reason." It is little wonder, therefore, that the events of the last few years concerning this question have been so painful and upsetting for the Roman Catholic community.

One of the most unfortunate by-products of the way in which Catholics have expressed their moral judgments is that they have seriously compromised their position in the larger community. They have appeared to be dogmatic and closed-minded and desirous of foisting their religious beliefs upon others. As a result, even the good and useful insights and judgments which Catholics have had to offer have become lost in debilitating and rancorous debate.

Given the approach to morality suggested by pragmatism, is there any role for the Church⁵⁸ to play in man's moral life? At first glance, it might appear that since the ethics which pragmatism proposes must be open and available to all men, that the Church is thereby effectively excluded from the realm of morality. Paradoxically, in a properly reconstructed morality, I would argue that the Church must become *more*, not less, involved in the moral life of man. It can do this, however, only by radically transforming its *manner* of involvement. It is quite obvious that in calling for a radical transformation of the Church's involvement in morality, one is assuming that the present role of the Church in this area is a failure. While it would be difficult if not impossible to "prove" such a large-scale assertion, there are two bits of evidence which strongly suggest that there is something profoundly wrong with the contemporary Church as a moral teacher. First, in the greatest crime of the twentieth century, and perhaps in the history of mankind—the Nazi extermination of the Jews—neither the local churches in Germany, Poland, and Hungary, nor the universal Church as symbolized in the Pope, were effectively present. Secondly, in the greatest domestic moral problem in the United States—racial injustice—the Church has been notoriously tardy in becoming involved and even now its involvement is scandalously slight in proportion to the enormity of the problem and the large quantity of resources available. The reality of the Church's deficiency in such matters makes imperative an effort to bring forth a change that will be some-

thing more than a superficial updating of the Church's relationship to man's moral struggle.

In calling for a radical reconstruction of the role of the Church in man's moral life, it must be remembered that the Church was not always as distant from and irrelevant to this life as it would seem to be at the present moment. In its most dynamic and formative moments to date, the Church did express and understand itself in terms of the living thought and experience which was at hand. Further, whatever criticisms might be made of the medieval Church, at least it must be admitted that it was "where the action was." There is much evidence to support the judgment that the Church, since the Renaissance and the Reformation, has increasingly drawn inward and has become less and less of a formative influence in the world.

Reflect a moment on the history of the Church and its self-understanding. After it became apparent that the "second coming" was not imminent, the Church had to devise ways of living in the world. During the period of the Roman Empire the Church settled for a division of things into those that were Caesar's and those that were God's. After the fall of the Roman Empire, however, the Church was the only viable institution in the West and it gradually came to dominate all spheres of life—personal, political, economic, social and intellectual. Of course, as the historians tell us, this domination was never absolute and there were always cracks in the unity of Christendom. Still, relative to other periods, there was a remarkable degree of cohesiveness and interpenetration of all spheres of life. Gradually, however, the Church became excluded from or, at best, moved to the periphery of these vital spheres. It was not until the twentieth century, nevertheless, that the Church grudgingly confessed its incompetence in these areas and retrenched to an area called "faith and morals." It is my contention that this rather neat partitioning of territories has collapsed. The reason for this collapse, I suggest, is that

"faith and morals" at once includes too much and too little. On the one hand, there is no human activity that lies outside faith and morals if these are vital dimensions of a person's life. On the other hand, if faith and morals become themselves specific, essentially independent orders of human activity called "religion" and "morality," then such important human activities as politics, economics, science and art stand outside faith and morals.

The assertion that the traditional Roman Catholic view on morality is no longer serviceable should not be understood in a despairing fashion. It does not exclude the belief and hope that we are at one of the great turning points in the life of man, the world and the Church and that Roman Catholics may be ready once again to do their share in "building the earth." If they are to do their share, however, they must begin to forge a new relationship to the moral life of man. They must create a new way of being present to all spheres of human activity. The paradox to which I referred earlier is again in evidence. By finally surrendering all claims to privilege in any region of human activity, it would appear that the Church is left with nothing, but this appearance of nothing may really turn out to be everything. The Church's presence may, in the future, be less obvious but perhaps more significant.

It must be stressed that a new form of involvement in man's moral life, on the part of the Church, is a hope and a task and not a finished reality. No one can at the present moment give a precise and adequate description of just what such a relationship should be. Any reconstruction, however, must begin from where we are and recognize that on the basis of experience some relationships must be judged improper. From what has already been stated, it should be evident that any form of moral dogmatism—whether grounded in "the official teaching of the Church" or in the Scriptures—is unacceptable. What, then, it may well be asked, happens to "divine laws" and "divine commands"? Has not God told us, indeed com-

manded us, to do some things and not others? Do we not have here, at least, a few absolute and unchangeable moral principles? The pragmatic response to the last two questions can only be a simple and stark No! There may be, and indeed I believe that there are, moral insights and values present in the Scriptures and the past life of the Church which will endure in some form as long as man exists. The call to love, justice and equality would be the clearest examples of such values. But the crucial point is that any such values are able to be affirmed on the pragmatic criterion which has earlier been advanced. These values are able to be justified in terms of human experience, and the particular forms of their concretization are not excluded from constant critical scrutiny in the light of the ongoing experience of the community.

Thus, while the Scriptures should play a vital role in the moral life of the Christian, they cannot be used as an answer book for moral questions—they cannot be used as a shortcut to a developed moral life. The reflective Christian will try to maintain a living dialogue with the Scriptures and the earlier experiences of the Church and will welcome any guidance which might be the fruit of such dialogue. Such a person, however, will not seek from these sources answers to moral problems, nor can he accept as definitive and beyond criticism any “answers” formulated by Christians in an earlier and different moment of the life of the Church.

As for “divine commands” or “divine laws,” pragmatism does not object to employing such language so long as it is understood symbolically and not literally. Nevertheless, caution must be urged for there are at least three dangers attached to the use of such terms. First, much energy is spent in deciding which parts of the Scriptures or the Christian tradition express divine law and which parts are accidental features of a particular age. As the history of Biblical scholarship indicates, Christians are continually reducing the so-called absolute truths of revelation. What pragmatism calls into question, however,

is the underlying assumption of most Christians that there are such truths, regardless of how few in number they may be.⁵⁹

The second danger in the employment of the notions of "divine commands" and "divine laws" is that they tend to diminish the importance of all other laws or obligations. Thus, for example, we see Christians who are quite comfortable in simultaneously being fervent religionists and rabid segregationists since there is no divine command to achieve integration. The third danger is that by assuming that God has given us the laws absolutely necessary for salvation, we are not stimulated to undertake the continuing and difficult task of creating those laws and values which are conducive to the development of human life. Thus Christians leave it to other men to struggle to bring forth new and more adequate modes of human relationships whereby man's moral life is fashioned and determined.

A crucial feature of the relationship between the Church and morality which is here envisioned is that it would not preclude specific judgments on concrete moral questions. On the contrary, it would necessitate them. These judgments could and often should be rendered by individual Christians, by the parish or local religious community, by bishops and even by the Pope. It can be argued that if we surrender the notion that we are merely the passive channel of divine commands, then we will have the courage to express our judgments, and if we make mistakes, as we always have and always will, then we will have the courage to change our judgments. The Church, then, would see itself as speaking and acting *before* God and it would accept the responsibility for its actions. What it would cease to do is to attempt to avoid this responsibility by claiming to speak *for* God.

The final point to be made in describing the relationship between the Church and man's moral life is that the Church cannot be used either as a moral crutch nor as a way of evading personal responsibility. In this regard, Christians are one with

all men—they do not possess any special powers for resolving moral problems. Nor can the Christian argue that apart from a belief in God, morality is impossible. “The Religion of humanity,” as James expressed it, “affords a basis for ethics as well as theism does.”⁶⁰ Whatever abstract speculative arguments might be advanced to “prove” the irrationality of doing good or making meaningful value-commitments while denying the reality of God, it would seem beyond dispute that many men who consider themselves atheists do indeed make moral commitments. Men such as Albert Camus, having looked full on the terrifying faces of doubt, despair and nihilism, have refused to succumb—they have lived lives of great meaning and significance in the absence of any moral certitude and also in the absence of any awareness of God. Having recognized that belief in God is not a prerequisite for morality, the Christian may still believe that he is morally energized by his faith in God and that such faith lends depth, meaning and significance to his life and that of man and the world. In any event, the personal responsibility which falls to all men cannot be exercised in a vacuum or in total isolation. If one does not believe in God, then one must accept this responsibility before his fellow men. If one does believe in God, then this responsibility is accepted both before one’s fellow men *and* in the presence of God.

NOTES

1. Throughout I will employ "ethics" and "moral philosophy" interchangeably. The effort being made here might properly be called a "metaphysics of morality," by which I mean an effort to ground, explain and defend the reasons or principles employed in the concrete act of making a moral decision.

2. Cf. Thomas J. J. Altizer, "Catholic Philosophy and the Death of God," *Cross Currents* (Summer, 1967), p. 275. "Among other things to think historically is to recognize a transformation in consciousness in accordance with the movements of history, and such thinking leaves no room for the naive supposition that historical or organic development is simply the progressive enlargement of an original and never changing form."

3. James, *Writings*, p. 611.

4. For some provocative observations concerning the relation between art and the affective dimension of urban life, see John J. McDermott, "Deprivation and Celebration: Suggestions for an Esthetic Ecology," in *New Essays In Phenomenology*, James M. Edie, ed. (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), pp. 116-130.

5. John Dewey, *Theory of the Moral Life* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 148. This is a redaction of John Dewey and James H. Tufts, *Ethics*, rev. ed., Part II (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1932).

6. John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: The Modern Library, 1930), p. 280.

7. Dewey, *Theory of the Moral Life*, p. 172.

8. Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 177.

9. *Ibid.*

10. John Dewey, *Theory of Valuation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 47.

11. James, *Writings*, pp. 296-297.

12. George Herbert Mead, who influenced and was influenced by Dewey, has given what is perhaps the most trenchant affirmation of the social dimension of the self: "The self is not something that exists first and then enters into relationship with others. . . ." "Selves can only exist in definite relationship to other selves." *Mind, Self, and Society, from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, Charles W. Morris, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), pp. 182, 164.

13. Dewey, *Experience and Education*, p. 32.

14. John Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1963), p. 77.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 84. See also p. 85.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
20. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 83. "The only philosophy which can 'criticize' the premises of the special sciences, without running the danger of being itself a pseudo-science, is that which takes into account the anthropological (in its broadest sense) basis of the sciences, just as the only one that can synthesize their conclusions, without running a like danger, is the one which steps outside these conclusions to place them in the broader context of social life."
21. Cf. Bernstein, *John Dewey*, p. 136. "There is no doubt that in fighting subjectivism on all fronts, Dewey did focus on the social as a category. But the charge that Dewey neglected the role of the individual is simply not true."
22. Sidney Hook, *John Dewey* (New York: The John Day Co., 1939), p. 149.
23. Cf. Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 373. "There cannot be any universal rule laid down, for example, regarding the respective scopes of private and public action."
24. Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy*, p. 284.
25. Cf. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 172. "The modern discovery of inner experience, of a realm of purely personal events that are always at the individual's command, and that are his exclusively as well as inexpensively for refuge, consolation and thrill is also a great and liberating discovery. It implies a new worth and sense of dignity in human individuality, a sense that an individual is not a mere property of nature, set in place according to a scheme independent of him, as an article is put in its place in a cabinet, but that he adds something, that he marks a contribution." For Dewey's acknowledgment of the importance of the social dimension of the individual, cf. *Individualism Old and New* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1962), pp. 81-82. "Individuals who are not bound together in associations, whether domestic, economic, religious, political, artistic or educational, are monstrosities. It is absurd to suppose that the ties which hold them together are merely external and do not react into mentality and character, producing the framework of personal disposition."
26. Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, p. 81.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 70. See also *ibid.*, pp. 52-53. "Individuals vibrate between a past that is intellectually too empty to give stability and a present that is too diversely crowded and chaotic to afford balance or direction to ideas and emotion."
29. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.
31. Cf. Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization*, p. 91. "It is a fact, rather than speculation that physical and animal nature are transformed in the process of education, and of incorporation in the means and consequences of associated political, legal, religious, industrial, and scientific and artistic institutions."

32. James, *Writings*, p. 435.

33. I would insist upon both "satisfactory" and "more satisfactory," since the task in both truth and moral efforts can be either to render an unsatisfactory situation satisfactory or a relatively satisfactory one even more satisfactory. This underlines the belief that man's struggle is not simply to resolve conflicts but, more positively, it is also to contribute to the building of the world.

34. Bernstein, introduction to Dewey, *Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, pp. xl-xli.

35. Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, p. 70.

36. James, *Writings*, p. 438.

37. Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 255.

38. See, for example, *ibid.*, p. 43. "What shall we do to make objects having value more secure in existence?" Also, *ibid.*, pp. 45, 77, 107. Near the conclusion of this work (p. 303) Dewey states: "Things loved, admired and revered, things that spiritualistic philosophies have seized upon as the defining characters of ultimate Being, are genuine elements of nature. But without the aid and support of deliberate action based on understanding of conditions, they are transitory and unstable, as well as narrow and confined in the number of those who enjoy them."

39. See, for example, Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 242. "Capricious pragmatism based on exaltation of personal desire; consolatory estheticism based on capacity for wringing contemplative enjoyment from even the tragedies of the outward spectacle; refugee idealism based on rendering thought omnipotent in the degree in which it is ineffective in concrete affairs;—these forms of subjectivism register an acceptance of what obstacles at the time prevent the active participation of the self in the ongoing course of events." Similarly, James, *Writings*, p. 603. "In theology, subjectivism develops as its 'left wing' antinomianism. In literature its left wing is romanticism. And in practical life it is either a nerveless sentimentality or a sensualism without bounds. Everywhere it fosters the fatalistic mood of mind. It makes those who are already too inert more passive still; it renders wholly reckless those whose energy is already in excess. All through history we find how subjectivism, as soon as it has a free career, exhausts itself in every sort of spiritual, moral and practical license."

40. Cf. H. S. Thayer, *Meaning and Action*, p. 141, n. 19. "It was one of Dewey's critical aims in reworking some of James's ideas to elaborate quite carefully the sense in which wants, feelings, and concerns are not *subjective* in the sense of 'private,' 'inner mental states,' 'hidden motives,' etc." See also, Dewey, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 572. "'Satisfaction' is satisfaction of the conditions prescribed by the problem. Personal satisfaction may enter in as it arises when any job is well done according to the requirements of the job itself; but it does not enter in any way into the determination of validity, because, on the contrary, it is conditioned by that determination."

41. Dewey, *Theory of the Moral Life*, pp. 38, 123; *Theory of Valuation*, p. 5; *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 260.

42. Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 152.

43. Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 260.

44. Dewey, *Theory of Valuation*, p. 5.

45. Dewey, *Theory of the Moral Life*, p. 123.

46. Cf. Dewey, *Theory of the Moral Life*, p. 176. "The fundamental conceptions of morals are, therefore, neither arbitrary nor artificial. They are not imposed upon human nature from without but develop out of its own operations and needs. Particular aspects of morals are transient; they are often, in their actual manifestation, defective and perverted. But the framework of moral conceptions is as permanent as human life itself."

47. Dewey, *Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, p. 287.

48. Dewey, *Theory of the Moral Life*, pp. 170-171. See also, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 315. "Liability is the beginning of responsibility."

49. See below, p. 221.

50. Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, pp. 187-188.

51. For an imaginative description of how conscience operates, or should operate, within the Roman Catholic community, see William Birmingham, "The Conscience of the Roman Catholic Layman," in *Conscience: Its Freedom and Limitations*, William C. Bier, ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, forthcoming 1970).

52. Henry Margenau, *Ethics and Science* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1964), p. 260.

53. Cf. Joseph Fletcher, *Situation Ethics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), Chap. III.

54. Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 239.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

56. Dewey, *Theory of the Moral Life*, p. 136. For a biting comment on the moralist's need for absolute certainty, see Margenau, *Ethics and Science*, pp. 147-148. "The reverential moralist refuses to accept principles unless they are indubitable, sacrosanct, and eternal; on the opposite side the immoral person regards himself unbound by laws of ethics which cannot be proved. The effectiveness of ethics seems to depend upon the existence of absolute and universal truths. Consider against such attitudes the patent fact that science, odious as it may be to many, has flourished immensely under the regime of tentative postulates!"

57. Recall that in the Introduction the point was made that there is no such entity as "religion"—rather there are many religions. It was also noted that any "reconstruction of religion" is in the first instance a reconstruction of that particular community to which the one doing the reconstructing belongs. Hence, in order to focus and sharpen the argument presented in this section, it will be presented with specific, though not exclusive, reference to Roman Catholicism.

58. For a consideration of the ambiguity characterizing "the Church," see below, p. 233.

59. Cf. Gabriel Moran, "The God of Revelation," p. 500. "What many men find inconceivable is the assumption that there are any truths that are unquestionable and are a norm to which men are to submit their freedom of inquiry. Whether there are two or twenty-two hundred of these revealed truths is not the paramount issue."

60. James, *Writings*, p. 619.

CHAPTER IV

GOD: A PRAGMATIC RECONSTRUCTION

In any pragmatic reconstruction of religion, it will be necessary to develop an appropriate "philosophy of God." To suggest that the God of traditional Christianity could remain untouched (existentially or conceptually) by such a reconstruction would be gravely to compromise and emasculate it at the outset.

A controlling assumption of this essay has been that there is no theology, philosophical or other, which emerges independently of a historical-cultural context and of the metaphysics or world view which is an articulation of that context. That is why any pragmatic reconstruction of religion must proceed from and develop within the metaphysics which was briefly outlined in the first chapter. To the extent that pragmatism really expresses a world view radically different from classical metaphysics, the God of pragmatism will be different from the God of classical philosophy.

The permeating principle as well as the conclusion of a pragmatic reconstruction such as is here suggested is that one can have "faith in God" but one cannot "know" God. Stated so starkly this is by no means a new idea. It will be necessary, therefore, to indicate what this means within a pragmatic framework in order to differentiate it from similar assertions within other philosophies. Negatively, I must again emphasize that the view which I am advancing is not fideism in the sense of

being hostile to knowledge or reason nor in the sense of maintaining faith in isolation from whatever knowledge man has achieved. From the pragmatic perspective, however, one of the formidable obstacles in the way of rethinking God is the refusal of most "religionists" to surrender their "spectator" or correspondence theory of knowledge. A corollary of this position is the inability to credit any religion or faith which does not give some kind of knowledge.

The primary purpose of a pragmatic reconstruction is to show that while religion has an indispensable role to play in the human endeavor, this role is not to give knowledge. Hence, as was argued in a preceding chapter, while faith is a mode of experience it is not a mode of knowledge. An important implication of this viewpoint, as was pointed out, is a firm denial that the Scriptures, creeds and dogmas can be viewed as giving us some kind of information *about* God. Further, this position rejects any role for religious concepts or symbols which views them as *representing* dimensions of God's reality. Now, against a view which maintains that all of these are nothing more than psychological projections, mere subjectivistic expressions of man's psyche, the traditional emphasis upon the "objectivity" of faith and religion is understandable. Since I have stressed and will continue to stress the "constructive" aspect of all concepts and symbols employed in religion, it is most important that I unequivocally disavow any interpretation of my position which makes of God *merely* a psychological projection of the human community. The authentic insight in the traditional claim of objectivity is that man can never be satisfied with a God who is spun out of the whole cloth of an enclosed imagination. In terms of the crudest pragmatism, therefore, I would contend that such a God can have no worth-while function in the human endeavor. Personally, I believe that the "object-like" God of traditional Christianity is dead, but if I am offered in its place a God

who is completely of man's making then I have no hesitancy in choosing to forget about God entirely.

The basic argument of this essay is that we are not obliged to choose either a religious subjectivism or a religious objectivism but are confronted with a more formidable task than the choice either of these alternatives would involve. The task, simply put, is to find a "third way," a way which is beyond traditional subjectivism and objectivism, a way which enables us to be responsive to the best in the ever-developing experience of mankind and at the same time continuous with the cumulative experience of those who have preceded us.

On the Need for Philosophical Theology

Pragmatism has been accused of giving such an important and necessary role to experience, action and the lived consequences of ideas, that it diminishes the role and importance of thought or intelligence. No criticism could be farther from the mark; "it is not the abandonment of thinking and inquiry that is asked for," Dewey remarks, "but more thinking and more significant inquiry."¹ My emphasis upon "lived consequences" in any pragmatic reconstruction of religious truth, morality, God and religion is not meant to belittle intelligence but to affirm it. Because the theoretic element cannot be evaluated "in itself"—that is, in isolation from the full life of the community—it does not mean that it is expendable or of secondary importance. Quite the reverse. Action can no more be separated from thought than thought from action.² Hence, any pragmatic reconstruction of religion which excludes the theoretical or speculative will be thin and superficial indeed.³ For this reason, I would insist that in any attempt at reconstructing religion, it will be necessary to develop a rational or natural theology—or, even better, a philosophical theology—understood as the bringing of "religious beliefs into accord with philosophic truth." John Herman Randall, Jr., so describes

philosophical theology and he goes on to say that it is an enterprise whose value "is not only intellectual but genuinely religious. Its worth lies not in the formulations of the moment—they will soon give way to others. It lies rather in the conviction that it is supremely important to make the never ending effort to understand."⁴ Randall maintains that "rational or natural theology has an undying appeal, for it performs an essential function for intelligent men. But the experiments of history make clear that the scheme of understanding employed must be a scheme which illuminates man and his experience."⁵ Randall, following Dewey, is here expressing the primary and controlling criterion for a pragmatic evaluation not only of God-speculation but of all speculation. The test of the worth of a philosophical theology will be "the test of the value of any philosophy which is offered us: Does it end in conclusions which, when they are referred back to ordinary life-experiences and their predicaments, render them more significant, more luminous to us, and make our dealings with them more fruitful?"⁶

It is quite evident that this "test" gives priority to experience, assigning it the role of "ultimate" arbiter; but it also allows for and indeed demands a certain rational consistency of coherence. In "The Sentiment of Rationality," James states that "of two conceptions equally fit to satisfy the logical demand, that one which awakens the active impulses, or satisfies other aesthetic demands better than the other, will be accounted the more rational conception, and will deservedly prevail."⁷ Two points must be noted in this selection: first, James understands "rational" as combining "logical" and "active" dimensions; second, while satisfaction of these "active impulses" is the deciding determinant of the worth of any rational system, such satisfaction cannot stand alone or act as a substitute for the "logical demand."

For pragmatism, then, while the quality of life to which any concept gives rise is the controlling criterion of the worth

of that concept, there are important sub-criteria which must also be acknowledged. Any significant philosophical theology must first of all have a reasonable inner coherence: by that I mean that it must not be shot through with gross contradictions and inconsistencies. Secondly, it must manifest a continuity with past thought and experience, for only by taking advantage of earlier human achievements can we hope to advance. Thirdly, any system of thought must have a high degree of contemporary consistency—that is, it must show itself to be in touch with the best knowledge and experience of its time. Finally, it must suggest new possibilities for the continuing development of human life.

Now, the point to be underlined here is that no one of these sub-criteria is, in isolation, a fully adequate criterion for evaluating a philosophy or theology—they are all relative to and in the service of the life of the community. Of course, even the greatest of philosophies do not possess all of these features to the same degree. Nevertheless, I think that it can safely be said that experience has shown that the only philosophies which prove worth-while in the long run are those characterized by some degree of inner coherence, continuity with the past, consistency with the present and novel insights.

The question of "consistency" has been and remains a very thorny one in philosophy. In general, individual men seem to prize either rational consistency or personal fulfillment. The entire effort of James and Dewey and of the pragmatic tradition is to expose this as a false either-or. From their perspective, rational consistency is a necessary factor in any personal fulfillment which goes beyond that of a narrow and whimsical emotionalism or individualism. The approval of rational consistency as an indispensable factor in a mature human life in no way jeopardizes pragmatism inasmuch as such consistency is valued precisely because "it works," because it has proven itself fruitful in man's undertakings. Of course, since experience is the primary and ultimate referent, any rational

consistency must be, at best, relative and tentative. Ongoing experience is always seeping in and creating gaps and deficiencies in the greatest of rational systems.

One further observation concerning the term *consistency* is relevant to any concern with religion: it is crucial to distinguish that consistency characterized by an abstract conceptual scheme from the consistency manifest in a personal life. The concrete living person can be said to possess the quality of consistency when there is manifest a kind of "holding together" not only a set of abstract ideas but also other modes of experience such as affective, aesthetic and religious. Hence, the person has an *integrating* power quite beyond that of any system of ideas. At times, the person can embrace concepts which are inconsistent—and even apparently contradictory—in the abstract. This cannot be a permanent state, however, since significant inconsistency gradually turns into a debilitating conflict. At this point the person will surrender one or the other of his conflicting ideas (usually sets of ideas) or he will bring them together in some synthesis or reconciling idea or pattern of ideas. This is exactly the service that I believe can be rendered to religion by a pragmatic reconstruction of it. James stresses the directing, integrating and reconciling functions of pragmatism as follows: its "only test of probable truth is what works best in the way of leading us, *what fits every part of life best and combines with the collectivity of experience's demands, nothing being omitted.*"⁸

Too often pragmatism is viewed as a doctrine of superficial activism or "consequentialism" which results from identifying it with its emphasis upon the "leading" function of beliefs or ideas. The phrases italicized in the above statement, however, make clear that there is a reflective role of a most formidable dimension in pragmatism. Rather than being a method which judges on the basis of a restricted set of consequences, pragmatism demands the fullest and most comprehensive reflective effort in an attempt to consider all possible aspects, experi-

ences and relations in any process of evaluation. Nevertheless, this "fitting together" into a reasonably consistent whole is a never-ending process for it is never achieved absolutely. The relativity of any consistency, whether personal or cultural, however, springs not from the limitation of the pragmatic method but from the processive-relational reality in which man finds himself.

Any reflective approach to God is to be evaluated by the same criteria which have already been proposed for the evaluation of any philosophical theology. It must initially have a reasonable consistency in that it conceptually holds together diverse modes of experience. But the decisive criterion must be whether it enables the person and the community to live their faith more fruitfully. It would, needless to say, be foolish to imagine that one could work out a fully formed philosophical theology which would then be "tested" by the community. On the contrary, there must be continual interaction between the theologian or philosopher and the existential life of the community (and not only his immediate religious community). Since communities change in bits and pieces, in fits and starts, every worth-while rational theology will be responsive to this and not try to achieve any definitive "philosophy of God." Such an attitude or approach would, I hope, avoid or at least minimize the errors and excesses of both rationalism and skeptical empiricism. A pragmatic philosophical theology will acknowledge the "rationalistic" insight that man has a continuing need to "know" God or at least in some way to grasp or envision "the whole." But pragmatism also concedes to empiricism its insight that we do not and cannot "know" or "experience" the whole, and hence any ideas or concepts of God are inevitably human constructs.

Though pragmatism is itself a form of empiricism, it differs from any empiricism which would view such constructs as nonsense or subjectivistic psychological projections. Having rejected any subjective-objective metaphysical dualism, it only asks

that such constructs prove fruitful in their "leading" function within the community. Hence, pragmatism can allow the fullest expression to speculative or imaginative forays so long as these are not supposed to be eternal mirrorings or representations of God but instead are recognized as distinct and necessary ways in which man contributes to the development of himself, the world and perhaps even God.

Religion, Science and Mystery

Throughout this essay the point has been made again and again that pragmatism evaluates all claims by testing them, that is, by observing the consequences of the ideas or practices involved in these claims. It is hoped that the impression has not thereby been given that pragmatism believes that it is in possession of some litmus-paper test whereby it can discover those religious institutions, symbols and practices which are worth-while and those which are not. Of course no such test exists except in the broad and admittedly vague form which has been described. The possibility and fruitfulness of devising an experimental method which can be employed in religion is presented here as a hypothesis. Even so, it is already evident that an important and necessary step in any effort to extend the experimental method of religion would be determining and describing the distinctive features of this particular application of the experimental method. There is, of course, no possibility of giving any definitive and final description of the characteristic marks of a religious experimental method. The reflective articulation of this method must itself develop in dialectic with the experiential consequences which would emerge from acting on the basis of an experimental method or at least an experimental attitude.

Whatever else it may eventually bring forth, it seems safe to say that the call for experimentation, whether in ethics or politics or religion, is not a call to destroy every aspect of those

institutions that now exist and then miraculously create better ones. Undoubtedly, many aspects of these institutions will not be capable of weathering close critical scrutiny and evaluation and should be discarded. At the same time, we will discover those principles, values and institutional practices which have stood the test of time—which have borne fruit. We will then be in a better position to extend, refine and develop these features of experience so as to render them even more worth-while for human life. Pragmatism, then, does not suggest that we act as if we are at point zero—as if man had no history or record of achievement. Rather it suggests that we not hesitate to construct hypotheses and act upon them on the basis of that already significant accumulation of human experience.

Pragmatism assumes, then, that though modern science has brought forth a revolutionary methodology it has not imposed something alien or external upon man and the world. Rather, it has refined and brought to higher intensity an activity which might be said to belong essentially to man and the world with which he is continuous. It is not, in my opinion, unduly speculative to suggest that cosmic evolution can be read in terms of experimentation—indeed, Teilhard de Chardin would seem to have done just that. As for man, has he not from the first developed through “trial and error,” by being responsive to the consequences of his ideas, beliefs and actions, and modifying them accordingly? The distinctive feature of our contemporary culture is that we have become explicitly conscious of our experimental nature. This is not to say that we have fully utilized this awareness. On the contrary, as already indicated, we might say that we are in but the first moment of its emergence and it remains for us to extend this method to all spheres of experience or human life.

It is at this point that many religiously-minded people balk, for much of what is dear to them seems threatened; indeed I believe that it is. Religion can claim no privileged sanctuary in the continuing human effort to sift out those beliefs which

are destructive of man from those which are viable and worthy of development. The need for continued self-correction, for continued review and re-evaluation even of principles which we have come in the course of history to designate as "first truths" or "first principles"—such a need is not restricted to a narrow range of human activities called scientific. Rather, it is coextensive with the human situation and perhaps with reality itself.

While the scientific community does not supply us with a method which can be applied mechanically to all kinds of experience, it does present us with a model for speculation in that it sets no absolute limits on speculation nor does it allow even its most basic principles to escape creative critical scrutiny. Nevertheless, not every speculation is accorded equal weight—to receive serious consideration by the scientific community a hypothesis must have an inner coherence, be reasonably consistent with what is already known and give some evidence of explaining the phenomena which it is formed to explain. Of course, only a further process of experimental verification can determine whether it does truly explain those phenomena.

Another way of expressing the point here being argued is to say that the scientific community is a model of a self-correcting community and that it is this principle of self-correction which must be extended to all other human communities. Again, it would seem that the human community is characteristically self-correcting. It cannot be emphasized too strongly, however, that this self-correction is a continuing task and is not achieved in reference to some abstract, absolute and immutable norm or standard. Only by attending to the experiential consequences of human beliefs, ideas and actions are we able to construct hypotheses which, if they prove fruitful, serve to "correct" the life of the community. While a self-correcting community must operate without absolutes or ab-

solute certainty, it is not thereby deprived of direction and guidelines for its development and enrichment.

If the scientific community is able to function and flourish in the absence of absolutes and absolute certainty, it would not seem presumptuous to suggest that a religious community supposedly characterized by a faith in what must ultimately be acknowledged as beyond conceiving, beyond naming and beyond experiencing directly—in short, a faith in the mystery of reality or in God—such a community ought also to be able to live without any absolutely certain underpinning or conclusions. Indeed, such a community should itself be the model of openness, possess rich diversity of thought and experience and involve constant self-criticism and continual and radical reconstruction.

Religion is often unfavorably contrasted with science on the basis of that "openness" which characterizes the scientific community and its members. For many people, both those who are pro-religion and those who are antireligion, it is almost axiomatic that religion, insofar as it involves commitment, cannot possess that openness which is so prized by contemporary man. Pragmatism, however, rejects the mutual exclusion of openness and commitment. Ralph Barton Perry summarizes James' attitude on this matter in the following passage:

Who shall say that it is not humanly possible both to believe, and also to harbor saving doubts; both to cast in your lot with one party, and also respect your opponents; both to feel a passionate devotion to your own cause and yet desire to give every cause a hearing; both to believe yourself right, and yet acknowledge the possibility that you may be wrong?⁹

Openness, then, is not emptiness but the willingness to acknowledge the limited and inadequate aspect of even one's most cherished beliefs. Commitment is not fanatical closed-minded

adherence to a belief but willingness to place oneself in the service of an ideal, a vision or a person.

It might be suggested that there is no authentic commitment without openness and no productive openness without commitment. As evidence, we can cite that very science which more than any other human achievement has made man aware of the worth and necessity of openness. Though modern science has increasingly affirmed and practiced openness, it did not destroy the older ideal of giving oneself totally to that in which one believes. Rather the scientific community transformed this ideal by existentially demonstrating that its members could be faithful to their commitment to the ideal of science only by a willingness to call into question and acknowledge evidence against even their most basic scientific principles.

In calling attention to the great humanistic contribution made by the experience of modern science, there is no intention of unduly romanticizing scientists. There is no suggestion here that any one scientist has ever been fully faithful to this ideal of commitment and openness. One finds in the scientific community what one finds in any religious community—a formidable gap between the existential life of its members and the vision or ideal which they affirm. Scientific “saints” are just as rare as religious ones. All that is being claimed is that science as a distinctive mode of human experience expressed in a community of scholars manifests at least as ideals the features of openness and commitment.

It is the experience of science, then, which suggests to pragmatism that we can surrender the notion of absolutely certain knowledge without becoming skeptics. Pragmatism acknowledges that there is no significant experimentation which is not related to a broader and more inclusive ideal or vision, which cannot be affirmed apart from a kind of faith. For this reason, it would not seem excessive to suggest that a religion characterized by the broadest and most inclusive vision must also be characterized by openness, experimentation and a plu-

ality of expressions. It must, however, run the risk which accompanies full participation in the processive world and cease the attempt to safeguard its vision, values and ideas by locating them in some transcendent and immutable realm.

A pragmatic reconstruction of religion, even of a theistic religion such as Christianity, is in the first instance a call to members of religious communities to move themselves into the center of the struggle in which man is engaged. It asks religion to surrender its defensiveness, protectiveness and separateness and to tap its great resources of creativity and dynamism. A dynamic religion cannot survive simply because science and philosophy cannot absolutely disprove its claims. Against a militant scientism it is important for religion to insist upon aspects and dimensions of human experience which cannot be supplied or accounted for by science. In doing this, religion keeps man aware of that mystery which encompasses him and in which he shares. This sense of mystery is one of religion's most distinctive and richest features but it is also its greatest temptation. A sense of mystery can be a trap, an escape and an obfuscation unless it is continually feeding and being fed by the diverse particulars of human experience. Actually, though it is often on their lips, most Christians have long since ceased to have any personal or communal sense or vital awareness of mystery. Their faith has been rationalized to the point of rendering it almost completely flat. But the paradox highlighted by contemporary experience is that mystery cannot be approached directly, it cannot be sought and encountered as if it were an object among other objects. Our sense of mystery is lessened, not deepened; it becomes mystification of the driest sort, when the organic interaction between the science or philosophy of the culture and religion is diminished. The irony here is that many of those who have shouted most loudly about the "rationality" of faith have isolated themselves from the rationality of their culture—or at best juxtaposed their faith to it. A faith which was intimately bound up with the develop-

ments of science, art, literature and technology could not help but develop *both* its sense of mystery and its relevance to human life.

Faith Seeking Understanding

Though I am urging an effort which breaks rather sharply with the traditional approach, I am quite willing to characterize this effort as a form of rational or philosophical theology and express the belief that it is in the tradition of "faith seeking understanding." Of course, *both* faith and understanding are continually undergoing transformation, since every generation of believers has the task of justifying or rationalizing its faith. I make no pretense of doing otherwise. Most would agree that there will be a difference in the form such justification takes; I insist that there is also a difference in the content. This, to some extent, is evident even in those approaches apparently closer to the dominant traditions of Roman Catholic thought, from theistic realism to what might be called transcendental theism. Different as each may be one from the other, however, they all have something in common that separates them from the pragmatic approach: they all maintain the possibility and even the necessity of establishing through rational argument the knowability of God. Such a "preamble of faith" may take the form of the classical proofs for God's existence or utilize some version of the "transcendental method"¹⁰ which establishes through reason the reality of the Absolute as a necessary or transcendental condition for knowledge. While none of these thinkers would suggest that faith in any way is a rational deduction from their metaphysics, they all seem to affirm a rational world with God as the knowable first principle. Such a world then serves as the rational underpinning or framework for faith.

I am, of course, giving a grossly oversimplified description of the dominant trend of the Roman Catholic philosophical

tradition. At the risk of an even greater oversimplification, I would suggest that in an effort to avoid reducing faith to some kind of arbitrary, subjectivistic, emotional and individualistic activity, Roman Catholic thinkers have tended to cut the mystery of faith to fit the bed of their particular version of a rational world.

In contrast, as will be developed in a bit more detail below, I would assert a kind of *agnosticism* concerning any absolutely ultimate principle of rationality. Hence, any faith in God will be radically irreducible and ultimate in relation to both the person and the community. In attempting to establish the necessity of proving God's existence, Henri Bouillard asks: "How can we know that our faith is the result of a miracle, that is to say of God's action, and that it is not simply an arbitrary human act?"¹¹ To which I would reply, "We cannot *know* that it is God's action and that is why we must have faith." In the final analysis, then, I would assert that there is no ground for faith except faith itself. I would further maintain that this holds whether the faith is Christian, Marxist or humanist.

Having asserted the radically noncognitive quality of faith, the other dimension of the dialectic must now be affirmed by contending that every reflective faith must make an effort to show that it is, if not fully compatible, at least not grossly incompatible with the thought and experience of the age. This is why all believers—Marxist and humanist as well as Christian—have felt compelled to do more than simply say, "This is what I believe, take it or leave it!" In every faith tradition, the more reflective believers endeavor to make manifest the concordance of faith with reason, whether in the form of proofs for the existence of God or demonstrations of the inevitability of the self-destruction of capitalism. Pragmatism does not oppose such efforts—indeed it insists upon them—but it avoids deceiving itself about the ultimate provability of the worth and truth of its basic acts of faith.

While a pragmatic approach to faith in God must present "reasons" or, better, justifications for believing in God, it is under no compunction to prove the irrationality of one who does not believe in God. Since the pragmatist affirms a world in which it is impossible to prove or disprove the existential reality of God, both rational theism and rational atheism are possible. The proponents of both must constantly act and hence believe beyond the available rational evidence; at the same time both will argue that their beliefs are more in accordance with the evidence now at hand. Neither can escape the possibility that he is wrong; both are willing to risk error because of the positive values of their faith. Needless to say, both the atheist and the theist must to some degree judge the other to be misguided; but we have moved beyond the nineteenth-century form of disagreement that compelled each party to accuse the other of irrationality, or worse. Today, I suggest, a man whose faith is secure *only* if he has persuaded himself that all other faiths are irrational is a man who in a significant way lacks faith.

Faith in God

Now the fact that it is not possible to disprove the reality of God is no excuse for smugness or complacency on the part of the concerned believer in God. It is not sufficient that one can somehow manage to live *with* one's faith; perhaps we should only affirm that faith which we cannot live *without*. Any worth-while faith must include positive values. Though such values cannot be advanced as "proofs" or absolute validations, a faith that lacked them completely would not long hold the allegiance of those who profess it, to say nothing of attracting those who do not. Before addressing myself to some of the values a belief in God might incorporate, let me pose in its most simple form the question confronting any contemporary Christian. Given the history of man in all its dimen-

sions—religious, social, philosophical, artistic and scientific—can one with some degree of rational consistency continue to have faith in God within the Judaeo-Christian tradition? I believe that one can but this is a faith; if it is to be a reflective faith, an effort must be made to indicate the compatibility of contemporary man with faith in the Judaeo-Christian God. One way to approach this question would be to affirm the traditional doctrine on God, at least in its basic principles, and then respond to the objections against it either by accidentally modifying this doctrine or by refutation of the objections. This, in my opinion, has been and remains the dominant approach on the part of Christian thinkers.

A better approach, I believe, is to consider the traditional doctrine of God as itself the product of history and culture and, having accepted this fact, attempt to create a suitable contemporary doctrine of God. Anyone endeavoring to reflect within a tradition for which God is ultimately an ineffable mystery is always in the paradoxical position of thinking and talking about what is, strictly speaking, incapable of being thought and talked about.¹² This can be a fruitful paradox as long as we avoid the ever-present temptation to reduce the mystery of faith by absolutizing the concepts or symbols which are employed in our reflections. Any God-believing community will to some extent have a doctrine of God. But this doctrine cannot be formulated, even in its most basic principles, in any once-and-for-all form. No particular doctrine of God can lay claim to being *the* Christian doctrine in the sense that all authentic reflection on the Christian faith must conform to it. On my hypothesis, there can be no absolutely non-debatable or non-developmental philosophical or theological principles, concepts or symbols concerning the faith which characterizes the Christian community. For this reason, I think that the way of describing faith in God which gives rise to the least distortion and allows for the maximum of speculation and reflection is to view this faith as a personal-communal-existential

orientation and relationship—a dynamic and developing relationship in virtue of which man is moved beyond himself not toward some outward or external object or goal but to a richer life which is at once a fuller realization of himself and a sharing in the life of that mysterious *Other* whom we have traditionally called God.

Minimal as this statement is, it allows for both the continuity and the development of faith. It is the living historical community, however, which continues and develops and not any particular patterns of thought or action. Further, it places the emphasis where it belongs in reflecting upon the God-belief of the community. The life of the community is the primary locus and reality of faith rather than the concepts, doctrines or symbols which are employed to express and develop this life. At the same time, there is no belittling or diminishing both the importance and the necessity of concepts, doctrines and symbols and of any theology, rational or other, which is charged with the task of creating and giving order to the concepts, doctrines and symbols utilized by the believing community. While insisting on the need for these functions and activities, viewing faith in God as an existential relationship allows for the widest range of creative and imaginative theologizing. Finally, such a hypothesis gives a criterion by which the various interpretations, concepts, doctrines and symbols can be evaluated. That criterion, of course, is the one described in an earlier chapter, namely, the quality of personal-communal life which results from the utilization of these concepts, doctrines and symbols.

By way of summary, then, it should be immediately evident that the inability of man to prove God's existence or even to "know" him is not as disastrous within this pragmatic framework or world view as it is in a more rationalistic one. Since knowledge is but one of a number of important and indispensable human experiences, faith in God is not ruled out or relegated to an inferior role in human life simply because

it is not a form of knowledge. Lest one imagine that this is offered as a facile defense of such faith, I would quickly add that justification for faith in God on pragmatic terms is a more, not a less, demanding task. As has already been indicated, the lived life of the community (in contrast to some idealization or conceptualization of it) is, in the long run, the only compelling evidence for the worth and authenticity of its faith. But an important element in its life is what can simply be called "the reflective." This is not manifest to the same degree in all the members of the community but it is the function of some of the members to attempt to express and develop faith by means of creative and imaginative thought patterns. This function in general might be designated "theology" while the effort to relate the scientific or philosophical thought and experience of mankind to the faith of the community might be called, as indicated above, "philosophical theology."

In the initial stages of its presentation, no theology, philosophical or other, can be much more than a rather vague and imprecise hypothesis or string of hypotheses. These hypotheses suggest the fruits which possibly will follow from adhering to them, but only actual emergence of these fruits will lend depth and authenticity to such hypotheses. Even at best such an effort can do no more than give a relative fulfillment or verification. Thus there can be no finished or complete theology, even in its basic principles, for the very dynamism and mystery of faith will always elude definitive expression.

Before venturing some speculations or hypotheses on God, I would like to touch upon the possibility of "experiencing God" and the meaning of the activity which I am referring to as "reconstructing God."

On Experiencing God

Since I have made so much of the point that God is unknowable, it might be assumed that I am preparing the way for

some kind of experience of God. This is so only in a highly qualified sense. In the first place, there is no direct experience of God such as there is of other persons or of things. Still, I have acknowledged a mode of experience which has been designated "faith," and I have also allowed for the possibility of an experience called "faith in God." "Faith in God," however, is not equivalent to "direct experience of God." This is not a question to be handled in a few words but perhaps something can be indicated of what is being suggested by showing how Dewey explains the role of "mystical experience" and what he calls the "sense of the whole."

Dewey does not deny the existence, authenticity and importance of experiences called "mystical." He insists, however, that they cannot be employed as proofs of God's existence—either for the one who undergoes such experiences or for others who recognize them in their fellow men. "In reality," Dewey states, "the only thing that can be said to be 'proved' is the existence of some complex of conditions that have operated to effect an adjustment in life, an orientation, that brings with it a sense of security and peace."¹³

In my opinion, Dewey is quite correctly distinguishing between "mystical experience" as a phenomenon and "mystical experience" as conclusive evidence of God's existence. I would add that if a mystic says that he has experiences of God, or the Absolute or Being or whatever, he is here making an act of faith. Again, I am emphasizing the radical and inescapable dimension of faith in man's relationship to God even in those men who appear to be favored with experiences of great depth and intensity.

The situation is similar, I believe, in the question of the possibility of knowing or experiencing the "whole" or the "totality." Various forms of rationalism claim the ability to know the "whole" whether as the Absolute, Being-Itself or as an ultimate principle of rationality in relation to which everything has reality. On the other hand, various empiricisms deny the

possibility of such knowledge and tend to restrict knowledge to a plurality of particulars. Needless to say, there are temptations to excess, though in opposite directions, in both traditions. The great rationalistic efforts have tended to transform the mystery of the "whole" into an abstract metaphysical principle, thereby leading to a loss of the richness of concrete experience and, incidentally, to a disastrous split between the God of the philosophers and the God of Abraham. Reacting against these efforts, the great empiricisms have tended to suppress or minimize the "sense of the whole" attested to by the long and varied mystical tradition. The result has been an impoverishment of that very experience which empiricism hails.

Without suggesting that pragmatism has succeeded, or that it is alone in its effort, I would maintain that pragmatism does endeavor to incorporate the best in both the rationalistic and the empirical traditions. With empiricism it denies the possibility of either experiencing or knowing the "ultimate" or the "whole" or the "totality"; with rationalism, however, it does allow for a role for some such reality. This can be seen quite clearly not only in James but perhaps more significantly in Dewey. It is well known that James did not hesitate to describe himself as a "theist" and even as a "crass supernaturalist." In a number of places he affirmed that we are "part and parcel of a wider self"¹⁴—that we are "*continuous with a MORE*."¹⁵ These, of course, are always faith affirmations for James; but to those unsympathetic to any God-belief, such assertions are usually dismissed as an excess of emotion or superficiality of thought on the part of James. Hence, to discover somewhat the same phenomenon (not the same interpretation) or experiential claim in Dewey, who was profoundly critical of theism and supposedly much less "tender-minded" than James, suggests that we are dealing with a phenomenon which cannot be simply written off as a mere psychological and subjectivistic projection.

A number of texts might be cited to make this point but

nowhere does Dewey express more movingly and sensitively man's relations to the "whole" than in the following:

A work of art elicits and accentuates this quality of being a whole and of belonging to the larger, all-inclusive, whole which is the universe in which we live. This fact, I think, is the explanation of that feeling of exquisite intelligibility and clarity we have in the presence of an object that is experienced with esthetic intensity. It explains also the religious feeling that accompanies intense esthetic perception. We are, as it were, introduced into a world beyond this world which is nevertheless the deeper reality of the world in which we live in our ordinary experiences. We are carried out beyond ourselves to find ourselves. I can see no psychological ground for such properties of an experience save that, somehow, the work of art operates to deepen and to raise to great clarity that sense of an enveloping undefined whole that accompanies every normal experience. This whole is then felt as an expansion of ourselves. For only one frustrated in a particular object of desire upon which he had staked himself, like Macbeth, finds that life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Where egotism is not the measure of reality and value, we are citizens of this vast world beyond ourselves, and any intense realization of its presence with and in us brings a peculiarly satisfying sense of unity in itself and with ourselves.¹⁰

A passage such as this presents a great temptation to the God-believer, since it is difficult to avoid appropriating it and seeing in it a variation on the traditional, "In Him we live and move and have our being." Easy appropriations are usually misleading, especially in the case of Dewey. His hostility to all forms of theism never diminished and I have no desire to show that deep down he was a theist. But I do find his thought congenial to a radically reconstructed theism—particularly when that reconstruction employs to such a great extent Dewey's

own principles and categories. My concern here, however, is to stress that for Dewey, not only can we not claim to "prove" the existence of God from mystical or religious experiences, but we cannot even claim to have an experience of the whole-as-such, since the whole is never presented to us as a really existing object. We do have an experience of a certain "complex of conditions" which can be described as a "sense of the whole." Within such experiences we construct "particular interpretations" or "imaginative construing" and this is what, according to Dewey, is manifest in the various religious doctrines.

We are confronted, then, with a widely reported phenomenon which might be and has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Some call it God, some the Universe and some describe it as "nothingness," but in every instance there is an act of faith inasmuch as each interpretation is an affirmation beyond the evidence, whether that evidence is understood as experiential or rational. This faith-dimension is present even in the grand rational or philosophical endeavors which are usually called speculative metaphysical systems. Randall's understanding of such systems is quite instructive in this regard.

"We never encounter *'the Universe,'*" Randall says, "we never act toward, experience or feel being or existence as 'a whole.'" Hence, there is "no discoverable 'ultimate context,' no 'ultimate substance.' . . . 'Ultimate' . . . is always relative, never 'absolute'; it is always 'ultimate for.'" Thus, Randall concludes that "'the Universe,' or 'Nature,' is not 'a process'—a single process." Further, the "Universe" or "Nature" does not have any single meaning.¹⁷

The point which Randall is making is central to and distinctive of the kind of process philosophy which I have designated pragmatic. Randall's interpretation of process distinguishes pragmatism from other process philosophies such as Bergson's, Whitehead's, Hartshorne's or Teilhard's. The mark of distinction is that the empirical process philosophy of pragmatism does not admit the possibility of knowing or experiencing the

process of reality as a single, unified whole. At the same time, pragmatism is distinct from more positivistic empiricisms in that it does not deny the legitimacy of thinking of or believing in reality as a single process. The propriety of such speculative constructivism is affirmed by Randall when, after denying that the universe can be known or experienced as "a whole" or a "single process," he maintains that nevertheless, "it is quite possible to take 'the Universe' as a single process, with a single 'meaning.' Most of the great philosophies have done just this, to say nothing of a multitude of religious schemes." When this is done, however, it is necessary to "invent a further 'context' for 'the Universe' or Nature"—it is necessary to construct "metaphysical myths" such as the "Unmoved Mover" or the "Unconditioned Conditioner" or the "First Cause." These myths, Randall maintains, "are logical constructions or extrapolations, like physical theories, and they possess similar functions." Without going into the more complex aspects of these functions, it is sufficient to say that they serve to unify and give direction to a plurality of human and natural processes. Randall insists, then, not only that these "metaphysical myths" are not meaningless but that "they have a perfectly definite function which can be objectively inquired into. They may well be basic in the living of human life, which often gets *its* 'meaning' from their use—or rather, which uses them to find and express its 'meaning.'" In any event, Randall, citing Woodbridge, asserts that "it is faith, and not knowledge, that 'justifies.'" ¹⁸

In summation, therefore, great mystical experiences and the great metaphysical systems are important not because they are modes of knowledge which inform us about or in some way "represent" something called "God" or "Nature," but because they play an indispensable role in human life by contributing to its meaning, illumination, enrichment and development.

On Reconstructing God

The title of this chapter, "God: A Pragmatic Reconstruction," will be offensive to many for it seems to suggest that man "reconstructs God." Those whose ears are less sensitive and whose minds are less literal might quickly conclude that I have merely chosen a dramatic phrase or metaphor to express the activity which is more precisely and properly designated as reconstructing man's *concept* of God. Such an interpretation is quite tempting, for it pacifies those who are outraged at the thought of any human influence on the reality of God and at the same time allows for some very radical revision and transformation of the traditional doctrine of God. Such a distinction, however, will not suffice. The conclusion that only man's concept of God can be reconstructed presupposes a particular concept of God—that of an absolutely immutable God. This, in my opinion, is the basic shortcoming of all theories of doctrinal development which try to restrict change to language, or concepts, or patterns of understanding. They are all variations on the assumption that the form of faith changes while the content remains the same. The world view which I presuppose permits no such dualism. I cannot begin to treat the formidable question of the relation between thought, language and reality but, hopefully, from what has already been said about pragmatism, it is evident that in a really processive world, thought and language are human means of participating in and contributing to this process. I readily acknowledge that the concept of a "processive-relational God" which will be proposed below is a symbol, or, to use Randall's phrase, a "metaphysical myth." Hence, this proposal will involve no claim of knowing God "as he is in himself." There is no intention here of substituting the metaphysical absolute of "process" for the metaphysical absolute of "immutability." Since there is, from this perspective, no possibility of our forming a concept or symbol of God

which can then be proved, or even believed, as representing him, all such symbols must be evaluated on the pragmatic criterion which has earlier been described.

Against this background and in accordance with the assumptions and criteria which have been advanced, let me indicate a few of the speculations which arise by way of a pragmatic reconstruction of God. At best such speculative forays can only be probes, tentative suggestions or hypotheses. They are initial steps which, if they are in any way successful, must bring forth criticism, qualifying refinements and developments from other members of the community.

To begin this pragmatic reconstruction, let me cite a few reasons advanced by James as justifications for "faith in God." James states: "If the hypothesis of God works satisfactorily in the widest sense of the word, it is true. Now whatever its residual difficulties may be, experience shows that it certainly does work, and that the problem is to build it out and determine it so that it will combine satisfactorily with all the other working truths."¹⁹ In a later work, James notes that "christian and non-christian critics alike accuse me of summoning people to say 'God exists,' *even when he doesn't exist*, because forsooth in my philosophy the 'truth' of the saying doesn't really mean that he exists in any shape whatever, but only that to say so feels good."²⁰ His critics, according to James, miss the point of what he is trying to do, which is to express the meaning of the concept of God in terms of a "positive experiential operation." Specifically, the concept of God means "the presence of 'promise' in the world. 'God or no God?' means 'promise or no promise?'"²¹

Elsewhere James asserts that theism "changes the dead blank *it* of the world into a living *thou*, with whom the whole man may have dealings."²² Also, for James, "theism means the affirmation of an eternal moral order and the letting loose of hope."²³ James does not intend that any of these assertions be understood as beyond argument or as supplying definitive

evidence or proof for the reality of God. It is worth noting that Dewey gave a sharply different interpretation to "faith in God"—at least as expressed in the history of religion. More often than not, Dewey held, such faith tended to de-energize rather than energize men. According to him, "men have never fully used the powers they possess to advance the good in life, because they have waited upon some power external to themselves and to nature to do the work they are responsible for doing."²⁴ My concern here is not to argue for the interpretation of either James or Dewey but rather to underline what has been an underlying theme of this essay, namely, that in the matter of the meaning of human life, there is no avoiding an act of faith which can at best be reinforced by experience and evidence which will always remain ambiguous and inconclusive.²⁵

This point must be continually kept in mind by those desirous of extending the dialogue between theists and atheists. Both manifest a deep concern for the meaning of human life, the necessity for hope and the crucial role of the future, but one believes that "faith in God" is a help while the other believes that it is a hindrance. Those on both sides of the question are now becoming aware that they must avoid any polemical approach which attempts to prove the superiority of their respective faiths. Nevertheless, a sentimentalized dialogue surely must also be avoided. To assert that we are all saying or believing the same thing but that we are using different words to express it is an affront to the seriousness of both positions.

Following James, I would hold that "faith in God" makes a difference in the life of both man and the universe. Did it not, the entire pragmatic justification which is being proposed would be undermined. "The whole defence of religious faith hinges upon action," according to James. "If the action required or inspired by the religious hypothesis is in no way different from that dictated by the naturalistic hypothesis,

then religious faith is pure superfluity, better pruned away, and controversy about its legitimacy is a piece of idle trifling, unworthy of serious minds."²⁶ Again, it must be stressed that the affirmation of difference is a *belief* and hence one should not imagine that there will be clear and definitive evidence to support it. This is especially important at the present moment when Christianity is undergoing a transformation whereby increasingly the characteristics which allegedly differentiated it from other religions as well as from humanism are being dropped or radically modified. There is, consequently, a deep crisis of identity on the part of those Christians who now recognize that many who profess no faith in God live lives of deep meaning and commitment. Since such Christians are hesitant to claim that so-called secularists or humanists are Christians without knowing it, it becomes more and more difficult to isolate values or activities which can be designated Christian. Actually, I do not think that such an effort is very fruitful. We must have the courage to act as we claim to believe and trust that the life which ensues will be adequate testimony to both the authenticity and the distinctiveness of our faith.

That faith in God does make a difference follows from James' understanding of faith as an indispensable creative principle in the development of man and the universe. If the universe were an essentially finished entity or if man's destiny were already determined, then faith would be little more than a guess as to what the universe is and whether man will reach his predetermined goal. Since, however, man and the universe are very much in the making, faith and hope play creative roles in *what* man and the universe shall be. As James puts it, "Work is still doing in the world-process,"²⁷ and hence faith "may be regarded as a formative factor in the universe."²⁸

Much of what has been presented up to this point will appear, even to those of a more traditional mind-set, acceptable

or at least reconcilable, when properly qualified, with classical Christian doctrine. After all, it is very difficult today to be against man accepting his responsibility for the making of himself or man playing a more creative role in the universe. Now, I am not prepared to prove that these new affirmations cannot be simply added onto the earlier doctrines concerning God without any basic modification of those doctrines. Nevertheless, I would argue against this possibility on the grounds that it betrays an inadequate philosophy of change. It tends to view change after the fashion of a mechanical building-block image whereby new ideas are simply laid upon old ones without any real change in the old ideas. Such a view is, in my opinion, manifest in certain Roman Catholic leaders who keep hailing the great and significant changes made since Vatican II but quickly add that nothing basic, essential or fundamental has changed or can change.

A more organic view of change recognizes that there can be no significant addition to the organism which does not, to some extent, transform the organism in *all* its aspects. Such a view, of course, does not claim that all ideas or activities are equally transforming of the organism nor that some parts are not more immediately affected by certain actions than others. Nor does it overlook varying rates of change such that some aspects of the organism may change so slowly and imperceptibly as to give the impression of being unchanging. For the purposes of this essay, I simply wish to keep open the possibility that the changes which are now being accepted, and indeed sought, by Christians in general and Roman Catholics in particular, will lead to transformations of doctrine more radical than anything we have yet encountered. While this will be threatening to many and may appear to jeopardize if not destroy Christianity, I believe that such a challenge can be met and indeed welcomed by a view of "faith in God" which refuses to identify this faith with even its most ancient and cherished formulations.

On Reconstructing the Divine Attributes

In order to illustrate a bit more concretely what is being suggested, let me briefly consider the traditional attributes of divine immutability, omniscience and omnipotence. These, like all other concepts, symbols or images—whether they appear in theology, in conciliar or papal documents, in dogmatic formulations or in the Scriptures—are historically and culturally conditioned; all are human constructs. This does not mean that they are merely subjectivistic or psychological projections, since the Christian can *believe* that they are articulations of the community involving a continuing existential faith-encounter with God. Nevertheless, we must accept responsibility for the language, concepts and symbols. We cannot attribute them to God and then refuse to do the hard work of continually evaluating them in the light of new experience. A pragmatic reconstruction does not determine, *a priori*, that any, much less all, of these symbols or concepts must be discarded. It does, however, refuse to admit, *a priori*, that any of them had such a privileged status as to escape the continuing critical scrutiny of the community.

When we turn to “divine immutability,” the first question is whether that notion still serves as a meaningful symbol by which to express our faith in God. It is understandable that in an age and culture in which *immutability* was the distinguishing mark of reality as against appearance, of knowledge as against opinion—that in such a culture reflection upon God would inevitably assign this characteristic to him in the highest degree. In a culture, however, in which growth, creative novelty, development and process are viewed as the most significant traits of reality, it would seem that the symbol of a “processive God” is more meaningful. As I have indicated above, this is not a claim of knowing God “as he is in himself”—such a possibility has been ruled out since the concept of “God

existing in himself" is unacceptable within a world view for which there are no radically independent entities. This, of course, does not mean that God cannot possess a reality more embracing and more significant than that expressed in our symbols. On the contrary, as was previously argued, the recognition that all religious symbols employed are of our making continually protects the "moreness" of the mystery which faith affirms.

Just as "immutability" implies self-sufficiency and essential unrelatedness, so "process" implies interdependence and relatedness. Hence, the most fit way of symbolizing the mystery of the reality affirmed by pragmatism is in terms of a "processive-relational God." We have already seen that pragmatism employs the metaphor of a "field" to express the interpenetrating and overlapping relationships which characterize reality. From this perspective, reality is experienced as "fields" within "fields" with no hard and fast boundaries and no radically independent or isolated entities. Any particular experience is always fringed by a "horizon" or by a "more" which, as James would say, is felt rather than conceived. It is this experience of a "beyond" which is variously interpreted by different faiths. I have already stressed that pragmatism does not accept any experience of the "whole" or the "totality" but that it does allow for an act of faith concerning it. Such faiths can range from a belief in the "nothingness" of that which is beyond man to a belief in a totally self-sufficient personal God. Regardless of the symbol employed—whether that of nothingness or that of a supernatural person—the affirmation is a faith-affirmation. Hence, if one conceives of the "whole" after the fashion of an all-encompassing "field"²⁰—as the "field" which includes and is included in every individual "field"—the justification for such a symbol cannot be that we know or experience God in this way. The mystery which is believed in by a pragmatic faith such as is here being suggested is *believable* but unknowable and unexperienceable. The symbols formed, con-

sciously or unconsciously, therefore, to enable us to participate more fully in this mystery must be evaluated in terms of their lived consequences rather than on the basis of their supposedly representing or corresponding to "God as he is in himself."

The first advantage in replacing the symbol of an "immutable God" with that of a "processive-relational God" is that the latter is a symbol more congenial to the best thought and experience of the present age. The symbol of a "processive-relational God" has the possibility at least of fulfilling what is for Randall a condition for any viable philosophical theology, namely, "to introduce intellectual consistency between the different areas of men's experience."³⁰ Needless to say, such consistency can never be perfect, absolute or finished. At any moment the best philosophical theology will be inadequate, but this does not prohibit our judging one as less inadequate than another. In this instance, a processive-relational metaphysics and a philosophical theology based on it would seem to have the best possibility for overcoming the burdensome and often destructive aspects of those dualisms which follow from the assumption that the most real being (God) is absolutely immutable and totally self-sufficient while all human experiences are processive and relational.

It is important to emphasize that to affirm a belief in a processive-relational God is not equivalent to a complete and total denial of the faith, insight and experience which characterized an earlier moment of the Christian community. A processive-relational God can also be an everlastingly enduring God—one who continues to be without necessarily continuing to be in the same way. From a religious point of view, therefore, this symbol enables us to retain the value of believing in a God whose life is greater and more extensive than man's, while simultaneously affirming an intimate involvement of man in this divine life. This second point leads to another advantage connected with the symbol of a processive-relational God—such a symbol enhances the importance of man's activities,

for in a very real sense we are involved in the creation of the world, ourselves and perhaps even God. If God is really related to man and if man can really bring forth novel realities which are not simply pale imitations of ideas in God's mind, then what God will be is to some extent dependent upon us.

Thus it can be argued that faith in a processive-relational God will be more effective in the task of intensifying religious or human life inasmuch as it increases the seriousness, indispensability and the responsibility of human actions. In a very real sense God needs men, not to imitate him or glorify him, but to join him and share with him in the undertaking traditionally called *creation* but more accurately described as *creating*. As James tells us, "God himself, . . . may draw vital strength and increase of very being from our fidelity."³¹ Surely such a faith would seem to have the possibility of enhancing man's life and spurring him on to greater efforts without placing him in competition with God. I hope it is not overly frivolous to say that in this task of making the world, God and man are in it together.³² If there is real novelty, then it is so for God as well as for man. If there is a real struggle, real risk for man, then in some way these hold for God. Along these lines, it might not be inappropriate to suggest that God did not simply decide to dip his toe into the messy waters of human history. He has paid us the great compliment of substantial immersion. It is possible, of course, that he has retained a country home where he can relax and be himself apart from the struggle and strife of the inner city of human endeavor, but somehow such splendid isolationism and spectatorism seem unlike him.

It must be conceded that such a "partnership view" as is here being suggested has a rather terrifying dimension, for it means that man and possibly God can really fail. We can and must, of course, believe and hope in the success of this undertaking, and the "ground" for such faith and hope can properly be said to be God. According to such a view, faith

and hope as well as love are truly creative; they are not affirmations that something is already in existence which we will receive as a reward for right action. Rather they are living efforts to bring to realization that which *ought* to exist.

Finally, there is a third advantage which accompanies the processive-relational symbol of God and the recognition that the symbol is of our making. Such an approach to God is better able both to preserve and to deepen the mystery which has always characterized the divine in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. It should aid us in avoiding the transformation of our culturally and historically formed ideas, symbols and religious practices into idols. Instead, we might be led to accept responsibility for them and thereby not hesitate to surrender them when we become persuaded that they are obstacles to the development of ourselves, whether personally or communally considered.

A crucial corollary of the question concerning God's mutability or immutability has to do with "transcendence." In the classical philosophy of God, the immutability of his essence inevitably and necessarily places him in an order of reality radically transcendent of and essentially independent of the "natural" order or the realm of human experience. Of course, the more profound and sophisticated explanations within this tradition have always tried to avoid a concept of transcendence which effectively isolates God from man and the world. Nevertheless, I do not believe that even the greatest and most subtle of these efforts has succeeded in avoiding a destructive dualism which implicitly at least affirms the transcendence of God at the expense of man and the world. On the other hand, some contemporary process philosophies have tended to stress the immanence of God to such an extent that they are continually on the edge of becoming a smothering pantheism.

In accordance with the approach which has been made throughout this essay, I will not attempt to solve this question

of divine transcendence versus divine immanence. Rather, I will shift the focus and thereby change the question from whether we can "know" or "prove" the transcendence of God to whether the concept of transcendence can any longer serve the community in its effort to deepen and develop its faith. My answer would be a qualified "Yes!" The qualification, of course, is that "divine transcendence" must undergo a radical reconstruction. While I suspect that such reconstruction can be undertaken from a number of perspectives, I would like to suggest something of what would follow from a reconstruction of "divine transcendence" within a pragmatic, processive and relational world view.

Negatively, of course, any objectified transcendent divinity, any being considered as existing complete in itself and transcending the ever-changing world of experience, is inadmissible. Absolute and total transcendence is unacceptable because it denies the reality of a mutual relationship between man and God and because it lessens the seriousness of the human effort to transform and help create the world. It is not accidental that the escape mentality which has so plagued Christianity in modern times is bound up with the notion of a God who is not of this world but who prepares a haven for us in his world once we have served our time in this "vale of tears."

What I am rejecting, of course, is a transcendent divinity which is "supernatural." In my opinion, the category of the supernatural was developed over against a specific view of nature—a nature which was fundamentally closed and finished. Given such a view of nature, the construction of the category of the supernatural was a necessary and liberating moment in the development of human consciousness. If, however, one views nature as open, as alive with unrealized but realizable possibilities and as radically developmental and relational, then the category of the supernatural would appear less useful and indeed quite misleading.

Recall that as a working principle in the task of evaluating

concepts or symbols of God, I have suggested that any concept or symbol is unacceptable which fails to illuminate human experience and which destroys or severely lessens human creativity and autonomy. A God who is absolutely transcendent and thereby complete in himself, possessed of all possible creative power and knowledge, is quite irrelevant to ongoing human experience except, perhaps, as a magical divinity with whom we constantly plead to bail us out of our miserable situation. A further consequence of this concept of God is that man's belief in his own creativity and autonomy is reduced to the most deceptive of fictions. At best such a concept of transcendent divinity renders man little more than a servile imitator.

Such are some of the negative aspects belonging to the traditional concept of "divine transcendence." This is not, however, the entire story, and I would now like to indicate the more positive features of this concept—those which I believe must somehow be accounted for in any reconstruction of God. I find great significance in the fact that at a moment in man's history when the notion of a transcendent divinity is severely criticized by a majority of the reflective members of society—that at this moment man is conceived as an essentially self-creative and self-transcending being. This, of course, is a position held in various forms by contemporary existentialists and phenomenologists—atheist, secular and Christian.

This affirmation of self-transcendence is also to be found in James and Dewey and other American pragmatists. A strength of the pragmatic recognition of human self-creativity is that the Promethean element receives a balance and a corrective from an assertion of man's continuity with and dependence upon nature. Nature, for these thinkers, is not a hostile or absurd reality nor is it only superficially related to man—something to be neutralized and transcended. Rather, nature is the locus of man's being and his and its becoming are inseparably bound up one with the other. There can be no

false deification of man—no temptation to think of man as the be-all and end-all of reality. "The sense of the dignity of human nature," Dewey asserts, "is as religious as is the sense of awe and reverence when it rests upon a sense of human nature as a cooperating part of a larger whole."³³ I cite Dewey here rather than similar texts from James because Dewey was so explicitly hostile to the notion of "transcendent divinity" as he understood it and as it was generally understood at the time. Nevertheless, Dewey was unalterably opposed to any tendency of man to close in upon himself or to conceive himself as the apex of reality. Indeed he accuses both "militant atheism" and "traditional supernaturalism" of being guilty of a common sin, namely, "the exclusive preoccupation . . . with man in isolation."³⁴ My concern here is not with whether Dewey was just in his criticism of either atheism or supernaturalism—I am simply calling attention to Dewey's fervent affirmation of a "beyond" or, if you wish, "transcendent" dimension to human experience.

In a text already cited above, Dewey maintained that by means of the art experience,

we are, as it were, introduced into a world beyond this world which is nevertheless the deeper reality of the world in which we live in our ordinary experiences. We are carried out beyond ourselves to find ourselves. . . . Where egotism is not made the measure of reality and value, we are citizens of this vast world beyond ourselves, and any intense realization of its presence with and in us brings a peculiarly satisfying sense of unity in itself and with ourselves.³⁵

What is striking in this passage is that Dewey is affirming something of what an older vocabulary called transcendence and immanence. I am not for a moment suggesting that Dewey is merely saying the same thing as earlier thinkers while using different words. On the contrary, the processive-relational metaphysics which I am assuming does not allow

for truth remaining the same while its conceptualization or verbalization changes. It does, however, allow for and insist upon continuity and so it can acknowledge a deep similarity of both situation and direction as regards developing experience. The assertion of novel experiences and realities does not involve the obliteration of earlier experiences and realities, though it does imply their transformation.

The recognition that thinkers of the stature of an Aquinas or a Hegel have attempted to account for something which they have called divine transcendence and divine immanence should not wed us inseparably to their formulations. At the same time we should not overlook the possibility that they have indicated a direction which must be received and continued however much it might be transformed. Whether the categories of divine transcendence and divine immanence carry too much historical baggage to be any longer useful is a question on which reasonable men are at the moment divided. Personally, I prefer the categories of *otherness* and *presence*, for, vague and imprecise as both are and despite the fact that in an age of instant communication they are already almost hackneyed, I think that they have an experiential dimension that the more traditional categories lack.

Another advantage of substituting otherness for transcendence and presence for immanence is that this makes possible a much richer dialogue between those who believe in God and those who do not. While avoiding a superficial indifferentism, it does bring both groups of thinkers into contact in a non-polemical way. At the same time it imposes on both the obligation to attempt to deepen their own faith-interpretations of this experience while remaining open and responsive to the faith-interpretation of the other. Again, however, the experience of cooperative search is more important than the language employed to describe that search. The following text from the atheist Roger Garaudy indicates the possibility for

a deep sharing between Marxist and Christian in spite of the fact that they adhere to profoundly different faiths:

As far as faith is concerned, whether faith in God or faith in our task, and whatever our difference regarding its source—for some, assent to a call from God; for others, purely human creation—, faith imposes on us the duty of seeing to it that every man becomes a man, a flaming hearth of initiative, a poet in the deepest sense of the word: one who has experienced, day by day, the creative surpassing of himself—what Christians call his transcendence and we call his authentic humanity.³⁶

What is important, then, is not that we retain the phrase “transcendent divinity” but that we acknowledge certain features of reality and human experience some of which in the past have been associated with transcendent divinity. A partial list of these crucial features would include openness, possibility, meaningfulness beyond what is now realized and increased significance and seriousness attached to the human struggle.

The notion of divine omniscience also presents great difficulty within the world presupposed by pragmatism. Any contention that there is a being who knows everything, past, present and future, must presuppose that there is no possibility for any radical novelty emerging in reality. Hence, from such a perspective, reality does not really change except in some surface fashion of particularizing what already pre-exists in some manner in God. Since the concept of divine omniscience would seem to reduce man to a mere imitator, thereby depriving him of creative autonomy, I suggest that it is no longer a serviceable symbol. As an immediate corollary of this rejection of the traditional concept of “divine omniscience,” divine providence can no longer be understood in terms of a preconceived plan. Whatever else a providential God may be, as Tillich has said, he cannot be a “fore-seeing” or a “fore-ordering” God.³⁷

Finally, what about the doctrine of divine omnipotence? As

is well known, there is nothing new in affirming the reality of God and denying that he is all-powerful. It has always been assumed, however, that one could not believe as a Christian without believing that God is omnipotent. If it is man, as I am suggesting, rather than God, who has formed the concept of divine omnipotence, then as a minimum the matter is open for reconsideration even on the part of Christian thinkers.

I will make no attempt to present even in sketchy form the arguments for and against divine omnipotence. It will suffice to recall that the classical objections to this attribute have always centered around the reality of evil. If one is determined to continue believing that God is omnipotent then nothing will really count against this and, as the history of philosophy attests, there will never be lacking explanations for any data which appear to threaten this belief. The question I would pose is this: Would we believe in divine omnipotence unless we believed that it is inseparably bound up with other aspects of the faith which we are unwilling to surrender? I do not believe that we would; "divine omnipotence" has been an albatross carried by the Christian faith long enough and it is high time it was jettisoned. We cannot disprove the reality of divine omnipotence; the question is whether this is a worthy symbol for man at his present level of consciousness. I submit that it is not, for in spite of all the distinctions, qualifications and rationalizations, does not divine omnipotence ultimately imply that God has the power to stop the misery and suffering which permeate the world but he chooses not to use it? Is it any wonder, then, that a significant group of reflective men, when forced to choose between such a God or no God, have without hesitancy declared their atheism?

I do not wish to sentimentalize an immensely complex question, but I must insist that the anguished experience of contemporary man cannot be dismissed as simply the latest expres-

sion of the failure to grasp the distinction between God's *causing* evil and his *permitting* it.

Once again, therefore, I am bypassing a classical controversy by posing a different question. On my terms, we no longer debate whether reason forces us to affirm God as omnipotent but whether omnipotence is a category that has meaning for human life. An initial response might suggest that this category is no longer meaningful because reflective men can no longer believe in a God who is omnipotent but for reasons known only to himself picks and chooses when to alleviate the suffering of his children. On the other hand, it might be possible to believe in a God who created man autonomous, who is neither a divine watchmaker nor a divine puppeteer. The God of this faith is, then, a God of human autonomy. The question of his omnipotence, on these conditions, is simply irrelevant. It has nothing to do with human life as it is daily experienced. This latter view can be as empty and superficial as the traditional one; but if we believe that our religious language is not intended to give us information about God but has as its purpose orientating, illuminating and energizing men, we can then argue for the release of possibilities in the second view not present in the first.

The God who would emerge from pragmatism would probably lose some of his sovereignty but may gain as a God of love who desires to share his life with relatively autonomous beings and is willing to risk something of himself in order to help these beings come into existence. By the same token, men may lose some of the security and superficial help which they received or believed they received from God; but this may be a small price to pay for the privilege of sharing with God the task of "building the earth." Such a cooperative endeavor avoids presenting man as either an isolated and tragic demigod, free to do anything he desires, or as a divine "rubber stamp," whose freedom is limited to approving what God already is doing or has done. I would suggest that responsibility

before God is a richer value and symbol than responsibility *to* God when the latter is understood as simply carrying out divine commands. The first, responsibility before God, seems most congenial to the incarnation, understood as the "call" of God to join with him in the task of redemptive creativity. The second, responsibility to God, still manifests an image of God as an Oriental potentate giving orders which we are to follow blindly and unquestioningly. Hence, *both* God and man, from the pragmatic perspective, are responsible for the world, since it is his world—and ours.

NOTES

1. Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, p. 140.
2. Even this phraseology tends to be misleading, for it gives a dualistic impression of thought and action as different modes of being. For pragmatism, of course, thought is "action" but action of a distinct kind.
3. A special word of warning should be given to those Roman Catholics who may suddenly find themselves attracted to pragmatism as a result of their dissatisfaction with certain rationalistic excesses in their own tradition. I would contend that a properly developed pragmatic religion would be more, not less, intellectually demanding—but, of course, in a radically different way.
4. Randall, *The Role of Knowledge in Western Religion*, p. 140.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
6. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 7.
7. James, *Writings*, p. 325.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 390 (italics added).
9. Perry, *In the Spirit of William James*, p. 206.
10. For an exposition of the "transcendental method" as employed by such men as Karl Rahner, André Marc, Emerich Coreth and Bernard Lonergan, see Otto Muck, S.J., *The Transcendental Method* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968).
11. Henri Bouillard, "A Dialogue With Barth: The Problem of Natural Theology," *Cross Currents* (Spring, 1968), p. 218.
12. Cf. Gabriel Marcel, "Theism and Personal Relationships," *Cross Currents* (Fall, 1950), p. 36. "When we talk about God: but I wrote in my first *Metaphysical Diary* that when we talk about God it is indeed no longer about God that we are talking."
13. Dewey, *A Common Faith*, p. 13.
14. James, *Writings*, p. 297.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 774.
16. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 195.
17. Randall, *Nature and Historical Experience*, pp. 198–199.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 199–201.
19. James, *Writings*, pp. 471–472.
20. James, *The Meaning of Truth*, pp. x–xi.
21. *Ibid.*, p. x.
22. William James, "Reflex Action and Theism," in *The Will to Believe* (New York: Dover, 1956), p. 127.
23. James, *Writings*, p. 354.
24. Dewey, *A Common Faith*, p. 46.

25. Cf. Louis Dupré, "Religion in a Secular World," *Christianity and Crisis* (April 15, 1968), pp. 74-75. "Certainly this deliberate choice of our contemporaries is a far cry from the direct experience of the sacred that their ancestors seemed to have. The experience on which we base our religious commitments is ambiguous: in accordance with the free nature of man, decisions are invited rather than imposed."

26. James, *Writings*, p. 734, n. 47.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 736.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 737.

29. This manner of conceiving God is not confined to the pragmatic tradition. Cf., for example, John A. T. Robinson, *Exploration into God* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), p. 97. "... 'the world' is not simply something that can be joined to 'God' by the word 'and,' as in traditional theistic discourse, but ... it is in God and God is in it in a way that perhaps enables one to talk of 'the divine field' as a physicist might talk of a magnetic field."

30. Randall, *The Role of Knowledge in Western Religion*, p. 110.

31. James, *The Will to Believe*, p. 61.

32. Cf. Alfred North Whitehead, *Dialogues of Alfred North Whitehead*, as recorded by Lucien Price (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1954), pp. 370-371. "God is *in* the world, or nowhere, creating continually in us and around us. This creative principle is everywhere, in animate and so-called inanimate matter, in the ether, water, earth, human hearts. But this creation is a continuing process, and 'the process is itself the actuality,' since no sooner do you arrive than you start on a fresh journey. Insofar as man partakes of this creative process does he partake of the divine, of God, and that participation is his immortality, reducing the question of whether his individuality survives death of the body to the estate of an irrelevancy. His true destiny as cocreator in the universe is his dignity and his grandeur."

33. Dewey, *A Common Faith*, p. 25.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

35. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 195.

36. Roger Garaudy, *From Anathema to Dialogue* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), p. 123.

37. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), Vol. I, p. 266.

CHAPTER V

RELIGION: A PRAGMATIC RECONSTRUCTION

Inasmuch as the central concern of this entire essay is to point in the direction of a pragmatic reconstruction of religion, this chapter cannot be viewed as introducing a topic or reality which has been absent from the previous chapters. At most, it can be said that what has been the *background* for our earlier concerns now becomes the *focus* of our deliberations. Even this mode of expression will be misleading unless we keep in mind both the "field" metaphor which has been frequently employed and the functional method being followed. The "field" metaphor keeps us aware of the overlapping and interpenetrating features of all kinds of experiences while allowing us to differentiate among them. The functional method keeps us from positing essentially separate orders of being such as the artistic, scientific, moral and religious while at the same time it justifies our use of such categories or abstractions because these distinctions enable us to deal more fruitfully with the complexity of the concrete situation. It is hoped that this will not be understood as implying that all experiences are "in reality" identical but simply that we use different concepts or words to express them. Art, science, morality and religion express classes of experience which are distinct but not separate. In our activities and experiences, as well as in our deliberations, there is selectivity, difference of emphasis or focus and dis-

tinctness of quality. While there are no hard and fast boundaries separating the flow of experiences, we have learned that some experiences have more in common with each other than they do with other experiences. Further, we have discovered that by abstracting from the concrete complexity of experiences and organizing them into different classes we are able to heighten and enrich human life. Thus, while all categories such as art, science, morality or religion are to some extent abstractions or human constructs, they are not illusions or fantasies manufactured by a supposedly isolated mind or imposed by a separated subject on an unknowable and alien "objective" reality. Indeed, the formation of these abstractions or categories is itself an experience in that it is a distinct transaction of the human organism with and within reality. This experience is itself categorized as "rational," "intellectual" or "intelligent," and is evaluated, as has been repeatedly stressed, in terms of its contribution to the quality and development of human life.

Bearing all this in mind, therefore, it is important that we avoid thinking of religion as having to do with some order of being designated "transcendent" or "spiritual" or "supernatural." At the same time, as was pointed out in the Introduction, it is permissible as a working description to refer to religion as a phenomenon "which involves beliefs, ideas, symbols, practices and institutions distinguishable from other phenomena, such as art, science or politics." All of these phenomena are manifestations of the human community, and their meaning and significance cannot be discovered or created apart from this community. If Christianity or any other religion has any importance, it can only be because it plays a role which adds a dimension to human life which would be absent without it. This is not to say that religion must be understood in narrow secularistic or humanistic terms, for pragmatism does not involve some finished or closed view of man and the world from which any reality other than man and the immediately experienceable world is excluded. It does insist, however, that

the meaning of human experience cannot be found by some metaphysical or fideistic leap into another world or transcendent realm of being. But pragmatism does not assume a human experience which is monolithic and clearly and exhaustively present to human understanding. It is human experience or human life which must be explored, discovered and created if man is to avoid stultifying in some enclosed forms or modes of activity, whether labeled religious or humanistic.

While pragmatism does not rule out a role for religion, even a theistic religion such as Christianity, neither does it guarantee the continuance of religion, particularly of any specific religion. Thus while there can be no dispute that up to this point in history religious activities have been a significant part of human life, there is still room for dispute as to whether religion *ought* to exist and if so in what form. Hence, a pragmatic reconstruction must begin with the phenomenon or phenomena of religion as historically, psychologically and sociologically manifested, but it must do more than describe or analyze what is or has been the structure of this phenomenon. Such a reconstruction must be an effort to transform the phenomenon which is the starting point of its undertaking. Of course, this effort presupposes a prior value-judgment, namely, that religion is both needed and in need of transformation. Now, strictly speaking, neither of these "needs" can be "proved" in the sense of establishing them by some rational deductive process. Since religion bears upon life in its existential comprehensiveness, there is no way of demonstrating its necessity by means of some prior principle or value. The "need for religion" can only be acknowledged as at once a "felt need" and an "act of faith" which, if absent, cannot be communicated by abstract argument. Hence, in one sense it is foolish to argue about it, for religion will last as long as and no longer than men have need of it. On the other hand, it would go counter to a primary thrust of this essay to suggest that because religion must be rooted in an irreducible and unprovable "felt need" and

"act of faith," it is thereby beyond reflective consideration and evaluation. Such felt needs and acts of faith are by no means self-evident or unambiguous as regards their meaning, as is clearly evidenced in the variety of interpretations to which they give rise. In the twentieth century one is confronted with numerous psychological, anthropological and sociological explanations of the "need for religion." Only a believer living in intellectual or cultural isolation can remain unaware and untouched by such explanations.

Most of what has been said concerning the "need for religion" holds for the "need to transform religion." Again, as long as a particular religion is fulfilling a need and is not in conflict with other needs, there will be no press to change it. No culture or period of history, of course, is ever in a state of absolute equilibrium in the sense of a perfect harmony existing among the economic, political, intellectual, artistic and religious features of its life. Nevertheless the degree of imbalance or disharmony is less in some periods and cultures than in others. In Western civilization the fifth century B.C. and the thirteenth century are usually cited as periods of great cohesiveness—periods in which life was relatively well integrated, in that there were no sharp conflicts or separations among art, religion, philosophy and politics. Using the same kind of criteria, it is evident that the twentieth century is the least cohesive and integrated period and culture in the history of Western civilization and perhaps in the history of man. Thus, those who argue for and attempt to transform Christianity are already cognizant of a deep inadequacy in their religion in relation to many of their experienced needs. Since, increasingly, contemporary Christians are participating in a variety of communities, they find themselves subject to a variety of claims and counter-claims, many of which they feel some need to honor.

Those who have no awareness, feeling or consciousness of the inadequacy just described cannot but be puzzled, upset and resentful of those calling for radical changes in the Chris-

tian religion. On the other hand, those who believe that the Christian religion, or any other religion for that matter, was necessary in a more primitive moment of man's history but is now an obstacle to human development are also puzzled, upset and resentful of those who waste good human energy trying to breathe life into a corpse. Anyone engaging in a pragmatic reconstruction of religion, therefore, must confess the irreducible, unprovable act of faith which undergirds this effort while at the same time striving to indicate what service and enrichment religion can or ought to bring to human life.

It would be grossly misleading to offer a pragmatic reconstruction of religion as some magic solution to the ills of religion, to say nothing of those of mankind. I do believe, however, that such a reconstruction would give some direction, that it suggests an approach which has possibilities for breaking beyond some of the dead-end situations in which both religion and mankind find themselves. At the same time, it does involve a sizable risk and will undoubtedly lead to the surrender of many ideas, institutions and practices which now seem indispensable. None of these, however, is excluded, *a priori*. In all likelihood many of them can survive and benefit from reconstruction, and those that cannot ought to be surrendered willingly, if not happily.

In one sense it is rather ridiculous to discuss the advisability of religion's willingness to surrender some of its claims. Such matters are not resolved by abstract debate or deliberate fiat. Consider, for example, the claims of religion in the realm of knowledge. For the past four hundred years there has been a succession of one cutback after another in the knowledge-claims of Christianity. The increasing isolation and irrelevance of religion as regards the ongoing problems of mankind have, I would contend, *happened*. Granted that such isolation and irrelevance are not yet total, it seems reasonable to conjecture that if religion continues as it has for some time, it cannot avoid becoming a relic—precious to a few, but in no way at

the center of world and human formation. My hypothesis, my belief if you will, is that this is not good for man and most certainly not for religion. But religion as such, including the Christian religion, is not important; only if it plays a distinctive and indispensable role in human life is an effort of pragmatic reconstruction of religion worth-while.¹ By the very criteria which pragmatism accepts, however, one can have no certainty or assurance in advance that such an undertaking can or ought to succeed.² This is both the strength and limitation of a pragmatic approach. It is willing to entertain any hypothesis but it insists that even religious hypotheses are not exempt from "making their way"—from bearing observable fruit.

The first moment, then, of any reconstruction will of necessity be theoretic, but if successful it must issue in positive consequences. A philosophical effort such as this cannot in itself bring forth these consequences—at best, it can present a hypothesis or string of hypotheses which are reasonable, that are congenial to present and past experience and suggestive of possibilities for future experience. If these hypotheses are in any way worth-while, they ought to serve as guidelines for action. By its very nature, however, a pragmatic reconstruction will not result in an eternal blueprint for religious or any other kind of activity. At the same time, it must render some service to the concrete ongoing religious life, that is, human life in its most comprehensive relations. In general, then, a pragmatic reconstruction of religion must enable a richer religious or human life to emerge, or at least show the possibility of such emergence. In particular, it must present guidelines and criteria by which this life is progressively to be realized. The key and distinguishing feature of this approach, as has already been pointed out, is that ultimately the worth of any hypothesis, guideline or criterion is determined by the consequences which issue from it—by the "quality of life" which it helps to emerge.

Pragmatic reconstruction of religion is, in a sense, a justifica-

tion of religion but it is or at least is intended to be an *experiential* justification. From the pragmatic point of view, the value of religion can be neither affirmed nor denied on the basis of a non-experiential criterion—whether it be a metaphysical system, a psychological theory, an “other world” derivation or a “future world” confirmation. Hence, pragmatism avoids both a sentimental subjectivism and a closed-minded objectivism. Further, it attempts to show that it is possible to have an approach to life in general and problem situations in particular, which is at once rigorous and sensitive, committed and open.

Pragmatic Reconstruction of Christian Faith

A central concern of any pragmatic reconstruction of religion is, needless to say, a reconstruction of faith. Indeed, religion and faith are so intertwined that for many they can be used interchangeably. I have chosen to use religion as the broader and more inclusive category but this is not a hard and fast distinction since if one understands faith in terms of “lived faith,” then it is but another way of describing religion. This follows since both religion and “lived faith” refer to human life in its most comprehensive and existential dimension. What is important for pragmatism, then, is not whether we choose to speak in terms of religion or of faith but that we recognize that both are in the service of human life and are to be judged accordingly.

It was noted in the Introduction that any pragmatic reconstruction necessarily involves a particular locus and a universal thrust. The same can be said of faith and that is why there has been a kind of oscillation between faith as a universal feature of the human condition and the Christian faith which is a particular manifestation of human faith. This “oscillation” will continue in what follows—the justification for it being the necessity to avoid both that abstractionism which results from centering on something called “faith in general,” and that paro-

chialism which results from treating the Christian faith as if it were totally unique and completely discontinuous with the human situation.

Let me lead into the reconstruction of Christian faith by recalling some of the points already made concerning faith. To begin with, recall that a pragmatic view of man and the world gives a central role to belief. The effort to divide men up into believers and nonbelievers is misleading: all men are believers when belief is understood as "an affair of leading, as a pointing ahead," a movement beyond that for which there is any absolutely compelling evidence. Hence, rather than view belief as an act performed by some men and not by others, pragmatism maintains that belief is rooted in the human condition—to be a man is to believe. But if it is evident that all men are believers, it is just as evident that all men do not share the same beliefs. The human community embodies a variety of beliefs and they are not all of equal importance nor of equal worth. Beliefs can and have energized men in the face of the tasks which confront them but they have also de-energized them and served as obstacles in the way of their development. Hence, we are not excused from evaluating our beliefs—those of others as well as our own. That is why pragmatism considers it of the utmost importance that we develop a method by means of which we can determine, to some extent at least, those beliefs which are worth-while and should be retained and developed, and those which are burdensome or destructive and deserving of being jettisoned. In the final analysis, as has been frequently noted, the basic criterion of the worth of a belief is the quality of life that it brings forth.

The recognition of the fact that all men are believers can be reassuring to the reflective Christian inasmuch as he need not feel that his Christian faith obliges him to separate himself from "men of reason." This notion of "men of reason" is really a fiction insofar as it suggests that those men who are "rational" have moved beyond belief or faith. Nevertheless, the Christian

cannot *use* this universality of belief as an apologetic for his own particular faith. Christians often rather smugly call attention to the widespread tendency of modern men to reject Christianity or formal religion and then passionately to commit themselves to such faiths as Marxism, scientism, Freudianism, humanism and the like. Some Christian apologists then argue that since the critics of Christianity are themselves professing, if only implicitly, a religious faith of their own, their criticisms are thereby vitiated. Certainly the Christian is justified in noting the faith assumptions which undergird the life and activities of non-Christians, but this in no way proves that the Christian faith is justified or more suitable for contemporary man than other faith manifestations. Further, while the Christian faith is entitled to a hearing from other men, it can claim no privileged status. From the pragmatic perspective, it must take its chances in the arena of life alongside of a variety of other faith claims.

In any pragmatic reconstruction of Christian faith, the non-cognitive quality of faith which was described earlier must be kept in mind. Faith, as we have already argued, is an experience—a particular kind of transaction of man with and within reality—which is intimately bound up with knowledge but is not identical with knowledge. Something of what the experience of faith is was conveyed when the distinction was made between belief and faith. While a belief was described as any affair of leading or pointing ahead for which rational evidence was lacking, faith was referred to as “a belief or set of beliefs which bear upon human life in its comprehensive effort.” Thus faith is that integrating experience whereby the various experiences which a person undergoes are held together, given some unity and cohesiveness. It is faith, then, which gives to a person or a community its most fundamental direction, order and meaning.

The most decisive aspect of a pragmatic reconstruction of Christian faith was expressed above when “faith in God” was described as “a personal-communal-existential orientation and relationship.” This description itself is an expression of faith

but it is a *pointer* expression rather than a conceptual expression. By that is meant: it gives a direction which hopefully will heighten the awareness of the Christian believer and thereby enable him to live this relationship more intensely. While this description obviously involves concepts, there is no pretense of presenting an abstract definition of faith or of giving the essential *content* of faith. This, of course, precludes evaluating this description of faith in terms of its inner or conceptual coherence or on the basis of its correspondence with some allegedly "objective" reality. In keeping with our pragmatic criterion, the worth of *describing* "faith in God" as an ongoing existential relationship must itself be determined on the basis of service to the life of faith. The Christian must ask himself whether viewing his faith in this manner enables him to deal better with certain difficulties and thereby achieve an enrichment of his faith and life. The most that a theoretical effort such as this can do is to suggest what are the advantages which may follow from this approach. I will attempt to indicate some of these advantages; but since in the reconstruction of faith as in the reconstruction of life there are seldom gains without losses, it will also be necessary to indicate what must be surrendered in a pragmatic reconstruction of Christian faith.

When the Christian faith in God is viewed as a processive existential relationship it allows us to acknowledge the cultural and historical dimensions of this faith while not falling prey to a superficial historicism or destructive cultural relativism. This faith can be influenced and even constituted by the culture in which it exists but never reduced to or identified with this culture. Further, it can and must be open to and in relation with the science, art, technology, economics, politics and communications media which compose a particular culture but it cannot be bound by any or all of these. Thus, while every generation of Christian believers must endeavor to articulate its faith in terms of the experience and thought of the age, this is not or at least should not be an effort to be fashionable

or to satisfy the criticism of non-Christians. On the contrary, the only compelling reason for transforming the Christian faith is that it does not satisfy the Christian believer. If all Christians were fully satisfied with the concepts, symbols, practices and institutions involved in their faith, the question of change would never even arise. In such a situation, any changes or contemporary adaptations could stem only from the crudest form of apologetics or proselytization. Hence, the primary condition for any pragmatic reconstruction of Christian faith is that one really does *believe*, but that at the same time the mode of one's faith or religious life is not completely satisfactory. This dual condition of faith and inadequacy presents both the possibility for and the problem of reconstruction. One *cannot* be concerned with the reconstruction of faith unless one really believes; one *would not* be concerned with it unless one also experienced a profound inadequacy attached to this faith.

It might be suggested that this dialectic of affirmation and transformation has been present in the Christian community from its earliest moments. It is manifest in the traditional acknowledgment of the "mystery of faith." By recognizing that Christian faith is not an intellectual act but the full living relationship between the person-community and God, we are able to maintain the mystery dimension of Christianity without transforming it into mystification. In acknowledging the radical nature of mystery which characterizes the Christian faith, the Christian never completely excluded efforts of understanding or articulation. The contemporary Christian, however, much more than earlier Christians, recognizes that these are *our* efforts, expressed in *our* language and continually subject to re-expression and re-articulation. On the pragmatic hypothesis here advanced, the contemporary Christian should be aware of and sensitive to the faith expressions of earlier moments in the life of the Church but he should not restrict his own faith expression to earlier ones nor should he seek his continuity of faith in these articulations. The continuity of faith is to be found in

the continuing existential relationship between the community and God. This relationship is, of course, dependent upon a living faith but the perennial temptation is to equate this relationship with specific expressions whether they are symbols, concepts, creeds or institutions. The point I am trying to make is rather delicate and subtle because I do not wish to fall into a dualism which makes the relationship a reality apart from its faith manifestations. Instead, the very actuality and quality of this human-divine relationship is dependent upon and inseparable from the symbols, concepts, language, creeds, rites and institutions which constitute the life of the Church. That is why one cannot be indifferent to these as if they were only on the surface of religious or human life. As they change so the relationship changes and as the relationship changes so does its faith expressions. There is a dialectic at work here which is most complex and does not lend itself to precise conceptual analysis. It is a multirelational dialectic which includes in some way the totality of man's relations. This description is itself a belief which is at once a working hypothesis—a construct intended to aid the reflective or speculative dimension of faith; and an existential guideline—an articulation which will hopefully orient and give direction to the life of the believer. This belief sensitizes us to the importance and relevance of every aspect of reality while enabling us to avoid a rationalistic systematizing whereby we attempt to show *exactly* where everything fits into the "eternal scheme" and *precisely* what role everyone and everything is to play in some "divine plan."

A pragmatic reconstruction of Christian faith will inevitably involve the loss of some features that seemed most distinctive of this faith. To begin with, Christian faith cannot be a refuge, a secure haven that protects believers from the anguish and terrors of the world. The Christian has been accused of a "failure of nerve" and too often the charge has been true. It has been true, however, not because he believed but because he did not really believe. When faith is used to avoid responsibility, when

it is employed as an excuse for not joining in the common human struggle, then it is being misused and deserves condemnation.

Another misconception about Christian faith is that it *answers* the basic questions confronting mankind. It is now evident, I believe, that a God who fills in the blank spaces—the so-called “God of gaps”—is dead. It is no longer permissible to believe in God in order to buttress our scientific or philosophical or even theological systems. The effort of religion to use God in this way has brought both religion and God into disrepute among most reflective men. One simple example will suffice: if you maintain that we must believe in God in order to explain motion in the world and a Newton comes along and explains motion without God, what happens to God? The history of science and philosophy in the modern era is the record of the collapse of one argument after another as sufficient *reason* for affirming God. For many this has meant the end of Christianity, the undermining of its very reason for being. For others, however, it is seen as an opportunity to purify the Christian faith—as the possible pathway to a rich renewal and development of this faith.³ If we are to continue to believe in God, therefore, it cannot be because he solves our problems or gets us out of difficult situations—it can only be because he has called us as free men to be responsible before him.

The Christian faith has attracted some and repelled others because it has appeared to be a kind of insurance policy—a no-risk guarantee concerning the meaning of human existence. Such a faith supposedly gives us certitude and frees us from all doubts—at least all doubts concerning important matters. It can be argued, however, that faith so understood—a faith of easy security, of superficial consolation which pretends to involve no risk and no doubt—is destructive of authentic faith. Such a view leads many men to surrender their Christian faith because they cannot honestly deny their doubts, their insecurities and their anguish. Nothing is more necessary, therefore, than to under-

stand that while faith enables us to live with risk, doubt, anguish and uncertainty, it does not remove them. It is perhaps this very lack of certitude which characterizes faith, for in the final analysis the believer must be willing to live his faith with no external assurances of its truth and authenticity.⁴ If he had such assurances he would have no need of faith.

Does all of this mean that the Christian is totally without evidence? Not necessarily, for the Christian has the lived evidence of his personal life and that of the life of the community within which he believes. Further, there must be some fruits, some relative fulfillments accruing to the human community if any reflective believer is to maintain his faith. Such evidence, however, is never absolutely compelling, it can never be such that every "right thinking" person will be forced to believe in this way. If it were, there would be no freedom and no faith.

Thus far I have said that faith is no refuge, no risk-free, doubt-free answer to our problems. Let me now suggest something of what faith is or ought to be in more positive terms. Many contemporary philosophers and psychologists maintain that man is distinguished from other beings because of the role of the "future" in his life. Because man is not a completed or finished being, what he will *become* cannot be separated from how he conceives and relates to the future. Inasmuch as man has a future he is not chained to what he now knows or is or to the kind of society or world in which he now finds himself. Man is the being who can play a decisive role in the transformation of himself and his world, but to do so he must *believe* that he can. Were man to stop believing—fully and completely to stop believing, whether consciously or unconsciously, explicitly or implicitly—human development and hence human life would come to a halt and man would be dead.

Faith, then, is the energy or at least supplies the energy which spurs man to transcend himself, to move beyond the inadequacies of the present, or as a minimum, to affirm a relationship which turns him outward and is non-isolating. Such faith, of

course, cannot be the exclusive preserve of Christians—it is manifested in every man who attempts to direct his own life and the life of others away from a narrow, selfish and destructive isolationism and toward a fuller and richer relationship with others.

A faith, Christian or other, which keeps man turned to the future must never become closed, it must be ever open and responsive to new insights, new discoveries, new creations and, most of all, to new possibilities. Such a faith will welcome the fullest reflective criticism even of itself. A faith which asks for a privileged sanctuary protected from the cumulative insights of human experience is a faith which is weak at the core. We might even suggest that it is deficient as faith since it can continue to exist only by closing itself off from the creations progressively achieved by man.

In stressing the openness and future-oriented aspect of man it is crucial to avoid any interpretation which sees human fulfillment or the fruits of faith as located *only* in the future. The "future" is a denigration of lives lived and lives being lived unless it is at once a reconstruction of past experience and an enhancement of the present. There can be no worth-while future or faith in the future, therefore, which denies the past or can be affirmed only at the expense of the present.⁵

Faith as "Useful" and "Hypothetical"

Pragmatism insists that faith—like all other activities, whether intellectual, artistic or religious—is ultimately justified in terms of its usefulness to the human community. Now, the term "useful" is ambiguous at best and grossly misleading at worst. Those who have been and are critical of the pragmatic tradition accuse it of being a crass utilitarianism which denies any value that goes beyond the practical. This criticism persists in spite of the fact that some forty years ago Dewey lamented "the

depreciated meaning that has come to be attached to the very meaning of the 'practical' and the useful":

Instead of being extended to cover all forms of action by means of which all the values of life are extended and rendered more secure, including the diffusion of the fine arts and cultivation of taste, the processes of education and all activities which are concerned with rendering human relationships more significant and worthy, the meaning of "practical" is limited to matters of ease, comfort, riches, bodily security and police order, possibly health, etc., things which in their isolation from other goods can only lay claim to restricted and narrow value.⁶

There is no pretense here of handling all the subtleties and complexities of a long-standing philosophical controversy by the citation of one text. I would insist, however, that the pragmatic criterion of "useful" is more complex than it has usually been portrayed. If one understands "useful" at its deepest level to mean whatever contributes to the enrichment and development of the quality of life, one avoids the more restricted meaning of individual or short-range satisfaction. Paradoxically, even the value of an approach which claims to seek knowledge or art "for their own sakes" is due to the fruitful consequences which result from such an approach. By not seeking the *immediate* practical results or the use for a limited and restricted context, great scientists and artists have contributed immeasurably to the quality of life of the human community.

The ambiguity attached to the terms "use" or "useful" is nowhere more in evidence than when they are employed in the religious sphere. The religious self-criticism of recent years would seem to be an explicit repudiation of any pragmatic defense of religion or faith in God. In recent years an increasing number of Christian thinkers have rejected any notion of God as the one who answers our questions or serves as an explanatory principle of man and the world. Similarly, we have

become acutely aware of how religion can be used to fulfill neurotic needs, to pacify men and protect them from the anguish and terrors of the human situation. These and other such "uses" of God or religion are, I am sure, repugnant to most reflective men. Yet at the same time, from many of those advancing such criticisms, there is the demand that God or religion be relevant to the ongoing questions of man—there is the insistence that the Church is justified only in terms of its service to the human community. What is happening here is not that we are discarding a God and a religion which were "useful" in favor of a God and religion which transcends use. Rather we are attempting to transform our faith in God so as to render it *more* useful, that is, useful in a fuller, richer and wider context.

An allied objection to pragmatism's emphasis upon the "usefulness" of faith is the objection to its description of faith in terms of hypothesis. It was James who was most explicit in asserting that faith was a working hypothesis. The citation of two texts will quickly indicate why James compared faith to a scientific hypothesis but why he did not thereby identify these two distinct kinds of experience. First the text which expresses the similarity:

If religious hypotheses about the universe be in order at all, then the active faiths of individuals in them, freely expressing themselves in life, are the experimental tests by which they are verified, and the only means by which their truth or falsehood can be wrought out. The truest scientific hypothesis is that which, as we say, "works" best; and it can be no otherwise with religious hypotheses.⁷

In another text, however, James acknowledges a profound difference among those hypotheses by which men order their lives—the difference being "that while some hypotheses can be refuted in five minutes, others may defy ages." Further, for such specifically religious hypotheses as God or immortality, their

"corroboration or repudiation by the nature of things may be deferred until the day of judgment."⁸

It can be argued that James' terminology is more misleading than helpful, but I contend that the basic thrust of his argument is eminently sound. Faith is that by which men live and for the sake of which they may be willing to die. Those who object to describing faith as a "lived hypothesis" insist that to do so is to render it "provisional" and deprive it of that aspect of total commitment by which religious faith is distinguished from science. Surely, religious faith involves and indeed demands the fullest and most complete commitment a person can make. The question, however, is whether such a commitment is possible only if one is absolutely certain of the truth and reality of that in which he believes. A continuing theme of this essay has been that a pragmatic reconstruction of religion would enable men to make fervent faith commitments in spite of the absence of certitude concerning the eventual outcome of such a commitment.

There is, then, no escaping a continual risk, doubt and uncertainty for the man of faith. He must decide whether he wishes "to risk" by placing his faith, and thereby his life, in the service of the positive possibilities of the universe, or whether he wishes to stand pat and await more conclusive evidence. It would seem that pragmatism allows the man of faith to escape the pitfalls of both absolutism and skepticism while retaining the strengths and insights of both. Negatively, absolutism is characterized by a closed, *a priori*, "once and for all," absolutely certain affirmation of specific values and truths. Positively, absolutism is characterized by a fervent and full commitment to what it claims to be of value or true. Skepticism, negatively considered, is a courageless and cynical refusal to commit oneself to anything; but positively it keeps man aware of the incompleteness, inadequacy and uncertainty which belongs to all human endeavors. The pragmatic reconstruction of Christian faith may well revive it and enable it to intensify its creative

potential, since pragmatism does not demand absolute certainty or complete assurance before acting.⁹ Hence, the Christian can say with James, "I find myself willing to take the universe to be really dangerous and adventurous without therefore backing out and crying 'no play.'"¹⁰

Pragmatic Reconstruction of Institutional Religion

Since the eighteenth century, increasing numbers of reflective men have been highly critical of institutional Christianity even when, though ceasing to be Christians, they retained a sympathy or nostalgia for many features of the Christian tradition. In recent years this kind of criticism has been taken over and heightened by many who insist that they are believing Christians and by some who are considered Christian theologians. The positive suggestion contained at least implicitly in these critiques is that Christianity has completed its institutional phase and must now continue in a non-institutional form. Though sympathetic to much of what is involved in such efforts to transform Christianity, it is my opinion that the anti-institutional mentality and phraseology which often accompanies some of the more imaginative contemporary critiques of religion is misleading at best and at worst is an obstacle to the very transformation at which these efforts are aimed.

In order to indicate something of what I believe a pragmatic reconstruction of institutional Christianity should involve, it will be necessary to begin by a brief consideration of the nature and role of institutions in human life. Implicit in the various manifestations of an anti-institutional mentality is the assumption of a radical dichotomy between man and his institutions. Even when it is conceded that institutions are necessary, it is a grudging concession which views them as necessary evils hopefully in the process of being overcome as man develops to a higher form of life. Thus it is that human liberation and fulfillment are thought to be achievable only over against institu-

tions or through the transcending of them. The position which I would support and the one rooted in pragmatism, at least in the pragmatism of George Herbert Mead and John Dewey, is diametrically opposed to anti-institutionalism. From the pragmatic perspective, institutions are not external to, merely accidentally related to, or superficially attached to human life. Rather they enter into the fabric and being of that life to such an extent that it is possible to say that man cannot be man apart from his institutions. Institutions, then, are not only instruments which are *used* by man—though in a sense they are just that—they are the ways in which man lives and hence *has* life.

In spite of this intimate involvement of institutions in the life of man, it is appropriate to distinguish these institutions from the ideals or values or vision which play such important roles in the development of human life. When ideals, values or vision are viewed as human creations which give direction to human life and keep it from stagnating, institutions can be viewed as the means by which ideas, values and vision are realized, lived or incarnated. In order to avoid a destructive means-ends dualism here, we must keep in mind the organic relationship which characterizes means and ends within the world of pragmatism. Thus institutions as *means* have no reality apart from the values or vision which are the *ends* and by the same token these values or visions arise and function only in relation to institutions. It is this paradoxical dialectic which is overlooked by those who are bent upon changing particular institutions. They fail to see that the very desire to change them, even destroy them, has emerged organically—was made possible—by these institutions. Thus, as Dewey pointed out, "the new ideal proposed by the individual (the moral reformer) is not a product of his private opinions, but is the outcome of the ideal embodied in existing customs, ideas and institutions."¹¹

The processive-relational metaphysics which pragmatism proposes is most helpful in the attempt to understand the nature

and role of institutions. From this perspective, an institution is a relationship or mode of association brought about in order to realize an ideal, a value or a vision. The dialectic by means of which man is forming and being formed by his institutions is illuminated and more fruitfully participated in if we reflect upon it in terms of the "field" metaphor earlier described. We can thereby recognize that human life is composed of a variety of institutions, more or less inclusive—"fields" within "fields"—which are constantly shifting, overlapping, interpenetrating, disappearing and coming into existence. While acknowledging the reality and pervasiveness of institutions, the "field" metaphor also obliges us to take into account those centers or foci of "fields" or relational-complexes which we call individuals. These individuals are at once the products of institutions and the initiators of institutional change as well as the creators of new institutions. Thus while there is no moment at which individual men exist totally independent of institutions, the processive nature or fluidity of the human situation enables men to avoid institutional solidification. Hence, the possibility of creating new institutions is but a manifestation of the processive world or reality which, as we saw, is characterized by the possibility and emergence of "the new."

Pragmatism affirms the necessity of institutions but it does not affirm the absolute necessity of any particular institutions. Thus pragmatism separates itself from any conservatism which places some institutions beyond change except in a superficial or accidental sense, but pragmatism also rejects any revolutionism or romantic utopianism which believes in the possibility of man living without institutions.

The awareness of man as the maker or creator of his institutions is of relatively recent origin in terms of human history and it is not surprising that this awareness has resulted in a kind of cultural trauma. One of the strengths of institutions in the past was man's belief that they had an origin independent of himself. Whether the ultimate source of institutions was

located in Nature or God was relatively unimportant in terms of the way in which man related to his institutions. In both situations, the responsibility of men was to discover those institutions which were *given*—hence necessary and immutable—and then to govern their lives in accordance with these “natural” or “divine” institutions. There can be no denying the efficacy, pragmatically speaking, of the beliefs that institutions originated in a source “higher” than man. The realization that such nonhuman origins can no longer be believed has led many to devalue radically the importance of institutions and to move in the direction of a destructive relativism. In reaction to this movement other men have become even more confirmed in their belief that institutions ultimately come from Nature or God and they have thereby been led to move in the direction of a shrill and closed-minded defense of the status quo, whether in economics, politics, the family or the Church. Pragmatism offers us a third alternative—responsibility for our institutions in such a manner that we can acknowledge their indispensability without becoming wedded to any of them. Further, it maintains that the energy which in the past was derived by man from the belief and certitude of the transhuman origin of institutions, must now be supplied by participating in the origin and development of his institutions. Pragmatism insists that man must now understand his responsibility first in terms of the obligation to create those institutions which are needed in order to continue the enrichment and development of human life; secondly, by accepting responsibility for the consequences of these institutions; and finally, as the willingness to modify or discard them when they no longer contribute to the furtherance of human life.

Man can fulfill his responsibility in reference to institutions only by recognizing the constant need for experimentation and self-correction. This activity has already been cited as central to the development of man, and nowhere is this more evident than in the matter of his institutions. Men must come to ac-

knowledge that their institutions are themselves experiments—experiments in human living. Of course, the experimentation which takes place in the political, educational, economic or religious regions of our life can never have the kind of exactness and precision which is characteristic of the specialized sciences. Nevertheless the continual review and evaluation of our institutions in terms of their contribution to human life can properly be called experimental or self-correcting. It is this kind of approach and attitude which is man's best protection against the strong temptation to freeze or stagnate his institutions. At the same time, pragmatism gives no encouragement to those who would frivolously disregard or destroy those institutions which are now in existence. Pragmatism, or any other philosophy, would render man an inestimable service if it helped him to break the increasingly destructive revolution-reaction dialectic. It would seem that men cannot indefinitely tolerate being whipsawed between mindless apostles of change and mindless defenders of order. That there must be change is no longer in dispute—the choice which must be made is between change which is directed, ordered and basically fruitful and change which is whimsical, chaotic and basically destructive. What is *not* needed at the moment is either emotional denunciations of institutions or rhetorical rhapsodizing about the institutions which we have. The great need is not for a revolutionary spirit—though to some extent this must always be present—but rather for creative imagination. It is only through the production of creative and imaginative ideas, actions and institutions that we will bring about a continuing radical transformation of the human situation and the emergence of an increasingly richer quality of life.¹²

What now of the pragmatic reconstruction of institutional religion or institutional Christianity? To the extent to which the preceding analysis and description of institutions is sound it must extend to religious institutions. In order to indicate more specifically and concretely just what this means, let me

consider the Roman Catholic Church in the light of the above remarks on institutions. At first glance there would seem to be no possibility for reconciling Roman Catholicism and pragmatism, since the former appears inseparably bound to an understanding of itself as a "divine institution" and the latter explicitly denies the legitimacy of any such notion. If membership in the Roman Catholic Church is based upon a belief that, *literally*, God instituted the Church, the papacy, the episcopacy and the sacraments, then the matter is settled and we need proceed no further. A strength of the Roman Catholic tradition, however, is that it has always had a deep suspicion of literalism or fundamentalism and hence has been able to hold in a sometimes uneasy relationship a variety of sub-traditions, styles, temperaments and interpretations. In great part this has been done by insisting upon unity in the "essentials" of faith while permitting the widest range in "accidentals." Inasmuch as the "essentials" were always steeped in mystery a further variation was permitted by conceding that any understanding or expression of these essential truths will always be inadequate and in need of further development. Still, until quite recently, the unquestioned assumption of practically all Roman Catholics was that there were some doctrines that were beyond question and subject only to a change in expression but not in content. I have already pointed out why I find such a view of doctrinal development unacceptable, and this suggestion for pragmatically reconstructing Roman Catholicism is but a concretization of the earlier stated position.

The basic difference between a pragmatic reconstruction and other approaches to change in the Church is found most significantly in the different assumptions which undergird these efforts. Most Roman Catholics assume that since the Church in its essential structures, institutions and doctrines is *given* by God, the most that reform or renewal can do is to accidentally modify them, make them more efficient, deepen the individual's understanding of them and thereby aid the members of the

Church to relate better to these "essentials." An effort at *reconstruction*, however, assumes that *all* church structures, institutions and doctrines are historically and culturally conditioned—that they are creations of the believing community. Thus, from a pragmatic perspective, it becomes an open question as to whether, for example, the notion of the Church as a "divine institution" is any longer serviceable. A hypothetical reconstruction of this doctrine might suggest that it symbolically expresses the Christian's belief that the institutions of the Church were and are created by the community in an effort to develop and bring to fuller realization that existential relationship which is the continuing reality in which and within which the Christian believes. The Christian can believe that he is making this effort in response to a "divine call" but again this is a symbol which the believer employs to express the radical mystery of faith in God.

Any vital reconstruction of Christianity would involve, according to the pragmatic hypothesis here offered, a transformation of the existential relationship between the Church and God, and indeed between man and God. "Vital reconstruction" should not be identified with a theoretical reconstruction such as the one here presented. At best any philosophical effort can be but one factor among an innumerable number of factors which combine to bring about significant changes in man or the Church. Nevertheless, however modest one must be about one's own contribution, such modesty should not lead to an underestimation of the importance and indispensability of human effort in bringing about change in the relationship and hence reality of man and God. In a similar fashion, the role of man's institutions should be neither exaggerated nor diminished. Not all of man's institutions are of equal value but since the only relationship which man can have with God is in and through those institutions which man himself creates, as these institutions change so changes the relationship and reality of both man and God.

The great mistake of traditional Roman Catholicism, therefore, is not that it overestimated the need for and significance of institutions. Rather it understood them in too restricted a fashion and was thereby led to freeze and solidify its vision in terms of particular institutions. The most obvious and perhaps most limiting instance of this is in the claim that the papacy and episcopacy are creations of God and hence the Christian has no choice but to live with them and perfect them as much as possible. Such a claim cannot help but become increasingly intolerable to Roman Catholics as the evidence, already more than compelling for most men, becomes overwhelming in support of the position that holds these institutions to have been formed and fashioned in response to concrete needs of particular moments in the life of the Church.

Roman Catholics must decide whether they wish to chain those values, the vision and the mission which they believe to be bound up with the Church, to the institutions of the papacy and episcopacy. A pragmatic reconstruction would not a priori rule out that these institutions may in some form be defensible. If this is so, however, it must be shown in terms of the good of the community. Failing this, it is not permissible to retreat into a mystique which places itself beyond reflection, reasonable criticism and the lessons of experience. It would seem to be an affront to the Spirit to continue to maintain that God is responsible for creating institutions which give rise to so many unsatisfactory consequences and which are so clearly inferior to the governing institutions of other communities. Further, Roman Catholics must seriously consider the extent to which they have made the papacy and its distinguishing feature, infallibility, into idols, that is, human creations which become the object of faith rather than means to the development of faith. Again, both the institutions of the papacy and the doctrine of infallibility might be reconstructible. A transformed papacy might serve to keep the Church and mankind aware of God's "call" to men to overcome their antagonisms and destructive

separations and bring forth a unified community of love. In similar fashion, the doctrine of infallibility might be viewed as a way of understanding and keeping alive the awareness of God's "promise"¹³ that he will be present to man to the fullest extent possible as man strives to realize this community of love.

These particular examples of how certain institutions and doctrines might be reconstructed are not of any great importance, but the underlying attitude concerning any change which will take place within the Church is crucial. The creative energy needed to make fruitful changes is seriously impeded as long as one continues to believe that there are absolute and definable limits to such changes in terms of certain institutions and doctrines. Further, there is a great misdirection of energy resulting from the traditional approach as is exemplified in the disproportionate amount of effort expended by a large number of reflective Roman Catholics to prove that the papacy or episcopacy is of divine origin. This leads to a misunderstanding of the problems at hand since Roman Catholics continue to deceive themselves into thinking that things would be resolved if the individual Pope or bishop were different. Of course, an individual does make an important difference but the Roman Catholic Church can serve as an impressive warning to man of how bad institutions consume and to some degree corrupt the best of men. The radical change which is called for in the case of the Roman Catholic community cannot be restricted to individuals—it is the institutions which form the lives of its members which must be changed if this community is to continue to exist in any significant sense.

In religious institutions as in all other institutions, there is no question of whether or not they should change. The only question is: Will they be changed intelligently—will they be changed with some degree of order and with some awareness, however incomplete and tentative, as to where they should lead? Or will these institutions continue to drift aimlessly,

changing only when that which they are intended to preserve has been lost, thereby courting the destructiveness of violent or revolutionary change? This, of course, is not a question for religion alone—it is the most pressing question confronting man and all of his institutions. Religion, one or several, could render mankind a great service were it to discover or create some ways of bringing about continual but orderly institutional change. And should not a religious community, more perhaps than any other, be most fit for just such an undertaking? Should it not be moved by the deepest, richest and least enclosed vision and ideals and hence be most aware of the impossibility of any permanent articulation or expression of this vision? Should not the mystery which is awakened by the faith in a revealing, a self-communicating God suggest the widest range of possibilities which man through his efforts is to realize, to incarnate? Yet, as history too painfully attests, “religion” has become labeled and indeed often labels itself as the most conservative of institutions—jealously guarding its “treasure” and fearful of any activity which appears to threaten it. And the most damning irony, of course, is that this treasure, that which really ought to be preserved through constant development, has turned into a “handful of dust,” desired for the most part only by lifeless, unimaginative and fearful people. Overstatement? Perhaps—but much too close to give comfort to anyone desirous of seeing religion and Christianity once again do their share. The pragmatic moral, of course, is that unless the vision of a religion touches and is touched by every aspect of developing experience, it cannot make its contribution nor realize its potential. Christianity is a case in point. At one time it was the formulator and at the center of all spheres of the culture which it engendered. Gradually it withdrew to a territory called “the sacred.” In our time, even those who are believing Christians are dissatisfied with such a partitioning of territories and are seeking a way of once again being present to every sphere of human life. But Christianity can never again be present in the

way it was in an earlier age. What new way or ways, therefore, can be discovered or created which will lead to a new and perhaps more intimate presence? No one knows; but the hypothesis advanced here is that a pragmatic reconstruction of institutional Christianity may at least start us in the direction of such a presence.

Pragmatic Reconstruction of "the Church"

For many Christians, a radically developmental man and world is the most serious threat to the Church. A pragmatic reconstruction of religion must endeavor not simply to neutralize the threat of a processive world but to "plug into" its profound possibilities. Needless to say, this is a formidable task and is not achieved by mouthing praiseworthy words about a dynamic and developmental Church while continuing to insist that there are values or truths or doctrines or institutions that remain fundamentally untouched by process. As has been repeatedly noted, the change or development which is presupposed by pragmatism does not admit of exceptions. The Church is not exempt from development and its effort to excuse itself from the risk and struggle that go with change has done much to render it irrelevant to man's contemporary situation.

There is a great need, therefore, to reconstruct the Church so as to enable it not only to acknowledge its radically developmental nature but, more important, to transform its life accordingly. In keeping with the kind of development described earlier, no theory of the development of the Church would be adequate if it restricts change to "accidentals." Development by *transformation* is radically different from development by change in language or expression; the first acknowledges change "through and through," while the second admits only of change along the edges or on the surface.

In stressing such radical development, there is no intention of denying a kind of continuity which also characterizes man and

the world. It is necessary to assert that it is the same man, the same world and the same Church which are now different from what they were. The *sameness*, however, is due to the fact that the "new" has grown out of the "old" and is not to be attributed to some principles or core reality which remains always the same. Thus a Church which was truly developing would grow as a whole; its entire life would be involved in the development, rather than having a part of its reality standing outside change.

Having acknowledged the radicalness, pervasiveness and depth of the change which belongs to man and the world and hence also to the Church, it must quickly be added that such change does not imply that man or the world or the Church are changing totally, in all their aspects, and at the same rate at every moment. Thus it would be the sheerest folly to attempt any total change of man or the world or even of a particular community, religious or other. Hence, any pragmatic reconstruction of the Church is not obliged to transform it in its entirety overnight. On the contrary, it must discriminate among those features of the Church which should be jettisoned, those which should be allowed to die quietly and those which should be continued and developed. That is why any serious concern with development and the bringing forth of the new must have greater, not less, concern with the past and the old.¹⁴

As long as we understand that "to develop" is not simply "to repeat," it can be maintained that in an adequate reconstruction of religion, the deepest and richest strains of the historical Christian community and the great Christian thinkers would be continued, developed and enriched. Of course, we cannot avoid picking and choosing that which is to be developed and that which is to be discarded, but such activity seems to have been present from the first moment of Christianity. The early Christians had to decide which features of Judaism to retain, which writings were "sacred" and which laws of the state to obey. Today we continue this sifting-out

process when we honor and praise a St. Francis of Assisi rather than a Cardinal Ximenes, a John XXIII rather than a Pius IX, and when we hail Vatican II rather than Vatican I. In the long run, the kind of Church which emerges will depend upon how well Christians pick and choose. Pragmatism does not pretend to present a method which will guarantee that we will always choose correctly. It does maintain, however, that by surrendering the illusion that we have any absolute standard to guide us infallibly and by concerning ourselves instead with the observable consequences of our decisions and the quality of life manifested in the community, we stand the best chance of creating a viable religion.

In a number of instances I have made reference to "the Church" without specifying just what was intended by this phrase. Some indication must now be given as to the way in which "the Church" is to be understood and to function in the processive-relational world of pragmatism. There are two basic questions which must be addressed: first, what relation does "the Church" have to "the human community"?; second, what relation does "the Church" have to the multiplicity and variety of churches which have existed and are existing?

Concerning the relation of *the* Church to *the* human community, the first point to be made is that the former both exists and does not yet exist in the same fashion as the latter. Recall that it was suggested that "*the* human community is still in a very real sense an ideal, a project, a task—it is what we believe should be created and that which, hopefully, we are creating." Similarly, *the* Church now exists in the form of a multiplicity of believing communities while at the same time it is coming into existence as the fully realized universal community of love. If one speaks of "the Church" as an ideal, the distinctive reality and role which pragmatism assigns to ideals must be kept in mind. Negatively, pragmatism rejects any interpretation of "ideals" which posits them as already existing in a transcendent realm. Ideals, according to pragmatism, are projections

of the community, an exercise of that creative imagination whose function is indispensable to the development of man. Thus, instead of an ideal functioning as an external, fully realized standard or norm, it is a moment in or aspect of the continuing dialectic by which man moves himself beyond himself. Given such an interpretation of "ideals," it is evident that *the Church* cannot be imagined as already fully existing in the transcendent order or the mind of God with the *earthly Church* being a limited approximation of this ideal Church. To view *the Church* in this way would seem to reduce human activity to a kind of passive imitating or an imperfect reduplicating of a reality already existing.

In terms of pragmatism, the kind of Church as well as the kind of man that will eventually emerge depends in great part upon man himself. Indeed *the Church* is *ultimately* indistinguishable from *the human community*. This is, of course, a highly controversial assertion and will draw the fire of both Christian and non-Christian, yet it seems that some such understanding of the relationship between *the Church* and *the human community* must be insisted upon from the point of view of the Christian. Reflective Christians find it most difficult any longer to maintain an interest in a Church whose destiny is separate from that of mankind's. The distinct advantage of viewing both man and *the Church* as in process is that we simultaneously avoid a destructive separatism and a sentimental and superficial identicalism. In one sense the Church as it now exists is but one human community (communities) among a variety of human communities. The Church can believe, however, that its mission is to be a living symbol of God's presence to man and the world and his invitation to men to overcome the fragmentation of the human community and join with him in a community of love. A specific feature of this mission is continually to strive to heighten man's awareness of his great potential not by turning him away from his own handiwork but by keeping him from making an idol of this handiwork.

This awareness can be achieved and be energizing only insofar as man is kept both from turning in upon himself as if he were the sole source of his potential or from demeaning himself by imagining that his potential is restricted to and absolutely determined by some pattern formed in cookie-cutter fashion by an allegedly omnipotent and radically transcendent being.

The Christian can continue to believe within and strive to develop *the Church*, therefore, only because he believes that it plays an indispensable role in the development and realization of mankind. The assumption here is that the human community is not built directly but only by the building of our particular communities in such a way that we gradually overcome the particularistic and isolating features of these communities and move in the direction of the one, universal community of man. If men were able simply to leave or step out of something called "the Church" into something called "the human community," then there would be no justification for the existence of any Church. Such a step, however, does not seem possible, as is borne out by the experience of many who leave church communities and then become involved in other particular and limited communities which are implicitly if not explicitly religious.

A processive view of the Church protects a particular church from becoming parochial not only in relation to other human communities but also to other churches. This brings me to the second of our two questions concerning "the Church," namely, "What relation does 'the Church' have to the multiplicity and variety of churches which have existed and are existing?" Though no particular church can be simply and exclusively identified with *the Church*, still each can believe that it is participating in both the being and becoming of *the Church*. This is not to say, however, that the present fragmentation and division which characterizes contemporary Christianity is acceptable or desirable. Unity must be a deep concern of all Christians but it is now evident that this cannot be a uni-

formity which obliterates or diminishes the rich variety of experiences which are and have been part of the life of the Church. Further, since the unity which it is the mission of the Church to help create is the unity of the human community, there can be no worth-while ecumenism whose boundaries are less than the boundaries of mankind.¹⁵ Christians must now recognize that the unity which has been a value and a crucial aspect of the Christian vision from the first is not something which was possessed, lost and is now to be regained. Instead the unity which must henceforth be the goal of all Christians is the unity of all men which is hopefully to be realized in the future.

No pragmatic reconstruction of religion can rest content with positing a goal as abstract as the "unity of mankind" without at least suggesting some of the ways by which that ideal might be realized. It is already evident from human history that unity will not be achieved merely by expressing a desire for it. I have already indicated that man can progress only through the full utilization and continual transformation of all of his institutions. Thus, men will become progressively unified only as they create new modes of association which will make possible a coming-together that intensifies and enriches individual persons rather than submerging or obliterating them. In such an effort there can be no question of assigning to the Church the task of human unity while other institutions are given more subordinate roles. Indeed, a key contention of this essay is that there is no possibility of the Church fulfilling its mission apart from the totality of human efforts and institutions. That is why it becomes more and more necessary for the Church to surrender any privileged claims in, or dominion over, such institutions as science, art, morality, economics, politics, education and the like. At the same time, as has already been indicated, the Church must discover or create ways of being present to all of these areas and institutions so as to enable them to realize to the fullest their possibilities, thereby making their distinctive contributions to the development of human life.

But what about the unification of the many Christian Churches now existing? Even if one were to concede that no Christian unity would be adequate unless it were at once human unity, it can be argued that an important step in the direction of full human unity might be a greater unity among Christians. Hence some suggestions as to how Christians might bring about more unity among themselves are in order. There is one obvious way which is beginning to emerge and will undoubtedly receive more consideration in the future. I refer to the approach which calls for all "like-minded" Christians, regardless of their particular tradition, to band together in concerted action, thought and prayer and to leave the traditional Churches to wither on the vine. Attractive as this burgeoning movement is, it is not, in my opinion, the approach which offers the most possibilities. While I am enthusiastically in favor of joining with anyone, Christian or non-Christian, in any activity, including those which might be designated "religious," on the basis of shared purpose and concern, I do not think that one must separate oneself from his own religious community in order to engage in such activity. This is not to say that a particular individual may not consciously disavow his relationship to that community in which he or she was born and raised, formed and deformed. I am simply asserting that it is not *necessary* to leave one's Church in order to work for a radical transformation of Christianity. I would further suggest that "leaving the Church" is a rather old-fashioned and inadequate spatial metaphor particularly at a moment in which what it means to be "in the Church" is undergoing such radical revision.

But what reason can be offered for continuing to remain a member of a community when one is in deep disagreement with many members and leaders of that community and one is no longer able to accept many doctrines and institutions of that community? The chief reason is the belief that we can move to a new and better form of human relations only by transforming those relations in which and by which one now exists.

Further, I believe that in reconstructing our particular communities in such a way that they become more open, more liberating and more concerned with the common problems of all men, we are thereby building the human community in the only way that it can be built. This belief might be expressed in terms of the concept of "convergence." Convergence, as I would understand it, rejects any unity through superficial syncretism, mechanical synthesis or lowest-common-denominator ecumenism and affirms a unity which will be the fruit of a progressive growing-together. The dynamic aspect of convergence demands fidelity to the deepest values and ideals of one's community or tradition through continuous transformation of the life of that community. In order to bring forth and help develop the best in one's own community, it is necessary to have the fullest communication possible with other communities. Such communication cannot help but bring the various communities closer together but hopefully in such a way that their own traditions, while being transformed, perhaps radically and unrecognizably, will not be simply negated and destroyed. Still, we cannot deny the possibility and likelihood that much will be lost—we can only hope that that which is truly worth-while will survive, develop and become enriched through transactions with other communities of faith.

One final point concerning the convergence which is being suggested here. It cannot be convergence toward some transcendent end, some omega point, already fully realized. The unity which is to be achieved as well as the means to this unity are both in process and must both be created by man. This does not, however, exclude the possibility or the belief that we are creating "in and through and with" the Spirit. Further, the "kingdom of God" may well be a fit symbol for that which is in process of being created—a community of men unified in God through love for one another.

Pragmatic Reconstruction of Religious Symbols

The pragmatic reconstruction of "the Church," as with the reconstruction of any community, is accomplished through reconstructing the doctrines, institutions and symbols which make up the life of the Church. We have already seen that the most basic change which pragmatism suggests is away from the view which sees these features as simply *given* by God. Instead, pragmatism urges us to recognize that these doctrines, institutions and symbols are the means by which the community articulates its irreducible and radically mysterious faith-experience of God. Again the advantages of viewing "faith in God" as an existential relationship is evident, for it allows the widest range to the creating of doctrines, institutions and symbols while not permitting such creations to be frivolous or whimsical. Since these came into existence as expressions of the community's faith-experience of God, they are developed, modified or discarded on the basis of their contribution to the development and enrichment of this all-inclusive relationship. This relationship is properly designated all-inclusive because man's relationship to God cannot be one relationship among other relationships—it can only be that unique relationship made possible and constituted through the totality of human relationships. While such a view enables the believer to account for the continuity of faith by means of the organic, historical continuity of the living community with God, it does not admit of the possibility of any absolutely indispensable and immutable expression or articulation of this continuity whether in the doctrines, institutions or symbols of the Christian community. Hence, it would not be impossible, however unlikely it appears at the moment, that in the distant future the Christian community will not retain any of the doctrines, institutions or symbols which now belong to it. Such a community would still be properly called the Christian Church insofar as it had

grown out of and was a continuing development of that existential relationship designated "faith in God."

To admit the possibility of such a complete change of doctrines, institutions and symbols is not to assert the necessity for such a change. It may be that some of these faith-expressions will remain to the end but to do so they must show themselves capable of continual transformation. It may be that a criterion for any allegedly "indispensable" aspects of Christianity would be the continuing possibility for reconstruction. If life is growth and development, a reliable test for the death of any doctrine, institution or symbol is its inability to take on new meaning and depth through assimilation of the new insights and experiences continually emerging in the human community. The point to be stressed here is that a pragmatic reconstruction insists that any evaluation of these aspects of Christianity must be an ongoing evaluation; a priori, no doctrine, institution or symbol can be either affirmed or denied. This means that at least some members of the Christian community have the task of suggesting by way of speculating and hypothesizing how the doctrines, institutions and symbols ought to be transformed. While the primary purpose of this essay has been to propose a basis and rationale for a radical reconstruction of Christianity, I have tried to indicate something of what such an approach might mean in terms of the Christian doctrine of God and the institutions of the Church. In that same vein, I would like now to hint at what a pragmatic reconstruction of some key Christian symbols might involve.

Recall that it has already been suggested that a crucial need for any reconstruction of religion is a philosophy of symbols which avoids reducing them to pure subjectivistic or psychological projections but also rejects treating them objectivistically, that is, as if they were representative in a one-to-one correspondence with some "outside" reality. While making no pretense of presenting a developed theory of religious symbols, I have nevertheless insisted that any such theory within the prag-

matic world view must recognize that symbols are functional and participational; that is, they are means by which the person or community participates in reality. Religious symbols, therefore, must be evaluated in terms of their ability "to order, direct, integrate and intensify the developing life of the community." Such symbols, of course, are faith-expressions, and within the Christian community they presuppose a personal-communal faith-experience of God. Here I must pause to underline this "faith" dimension of the "experience of God," from the point of view of pragmatism. Pragmatism, as we have seen, denies any possibility of directly experiencing "the whole" or "the totality" or "God." Thus if one speaks of the "divine-human encounter," as I have done, the term "encounter" is being used symbolically in the sense that men do not encounter God as they encounter each other. The Christian can believe in the reality and historicity of some mysterious ongoing event which he expresses as an "encounter with God" but it cannot be stressed too strongly that this is an irreducible act of faith. What must be avoided is positing some "experience of God" as a basis or prerequisite for faith. On the hypothesis here advanced, "faith" is an indispensable constituent, not a derived conclusion, of any "experience of God." This is why the Christian believer can never completely exclude the possibility that his "faith" is nothing more than a sheer subjectivistic and psychological projection. He cannot, of course, accept such an interpretation as an established fact and continue to believe.

Given this understanding and role of religious symbols, what are the Christian symbols which seem finished and what are those which might be viable? In considering the pragmatic reconstruction of God, it was argued that omnipotence, omniscience and immutability were no longer fit ways of symbolizing the Christian's "faith in God." Similarly, "God the message sender," "God the lawgiver," and "God the institution founder" are inappropriate symbols within the world presupposed by pragmatism. On the other hand, "God as triune," "God as

love," and "God as incarnate" may have rich possibilities for development and service within a processive-relational world. As living symbols, however, it will not suffice to retain them in some abstract form as objects of faith. They must be operative in the life of the community and, initially at least, reflection should indicate something of the contribution which they have made, are making and can make to the furtherance of this life. Let me illustrate this point with reference to "God as incarnate in Jesus Christ."

The first step in any pragmatic reconstruction of this symbol is to reject viewing it as an event which happened in the past and as localized exclusively in Jesus of Nazareth. Instead of speaking of God as having *become* incarnate, it is more appropriate to speak of God *becoming* incarnate. The Christian may believe that in Jesus we have a unique and indispensable manifestation of the presence of God to man and the world, but Jesus as the Christ must be seen as processively coming into existence. There are several advantages attached to viewing the symbol of Christ in processive and relational terms rather than in static and substantive ones. First, it is more congenial to the thought and experience which now characterizes man's life. Secondly, such a processive view of Christ is not without anticipations in the earliest moment of the reflective life of the Church.¹⁶ Thirdly, it opens up new possibilities in terms of the relation of Christ to other religions as well as to non-Western cultures. Finally, it gives new dimension and significance to all man's institutions and every aspect of his life, for nothing less than the full involvement and participation of man through his institutions will bring about the full realization of the reality of Christ.

If the incarnational tradition of Christianity is cited as eminently compatible with pragmatism, it seems only fair to acknowledge that there is another tradition which seems appreciably less so. I refer to Christian eschatology understood as the doctrine of a *final* consummation of the world and as a belief

in the coming of the "kingdom" after which there will be no more struggle and strife but eternal peace. However much one emphasizes that this is a mystery and however symbolically we are to understand "end of the world" and "kingdom of God," there is no denying that the overwhelming thrust of the Christian eschatological vision has been to suggest that at some moment in the future the historical process will reach its end and man will enter into eternity. It is evident that in its traditional forms this eschatology has involved a dualism between time and eternity which has been rejected by the radically processive nature of reality affirmed by pragmatism. A pragmatic reconstruction of Christian eschatology, then, must be capable of overcoming this dualism. There are two hypotheses which suggest ways of doing this—one is more compatible with the dominant tradition in pragmatism and the other more congenial to the dominant tradition in Christianity. The first hypothesis would understand "kingdom of God," "unified community of man," "fullness of Christ" as imaginative projections of the believing community whereby man is continually spurred on to greater degrees of unity but *always* in a situation that is to some extent divided, in conflict and thus disunified. The second hypothesis would understand those same symbols as imaginative projections of the believing community in relationship with God whereby man is led eventually to overcome all his divisions and conflicts and thus bring forth a truly unified human community.

While the first of these hypotheses appears more congenial to pragmatism, it would not seem that it is positively demanded by it. If pragmatism is to avoid its own form of dogmatism and acknowledge the possibility of radical transformation of man and the world, it cannot, *a priori*, exclude the possibility of eventually overcoming the evil which is now part of human life. To deny that evil can eventually be banished from the world is to make of evil an absolutely permanent feature of reality. It may well be such, but a philosophy which holds out

to man the possibility of radically reconstructing himself and the world cannot posit the permanence of evil with absolute certainty. On the other hand, the second hypothesis, which is most congenial to traditional Christianity, must acknowledge that man is involved in the creation both of the end and the means to the "kingdom of God." Further, the failure to attain this end, not only individually but also collectively, must be admitted as a possibility.

There is a belief which has been part of Christian eschatology from the first but which appears to be in conflict not only with much of the pragmatic tradition but also with the dominant mind-set of most contemporary thinkers including some who are Christians. I refer to the belief in personal immortality as symbolized in the "promise of eternal life" and the "resurrection." It is this belief and its corollaries—rewards and punishments, heaven and hell, "save your own soul"—which have drawn the heaviest criticism from non-Christians. The details of this criticism need not concern us, for they all directly or indirectly reduce to the charge that the Christian belief in personal immortality has been basically anti-life in that it turned man away from the tasks at hand and led him to dissipate his energies in wishfully dreaming of a reward in "another world." What must be stressed here is that it is not a question of being able to prove that man is not immortal. As in the question of God, immortality is neither provable nor unprovable in the generally accepted meaning of those terms. The crucial question for reflective contemporary men, however, is whether belief in personal immortality is a belief worthy of man. This is an exceptionally difficult point to grasp for most Christians. While they can understand that many men may not believe in immortality, they cannot conceive of the possibility that such men are simply not *concerned* with it.

Those men who are no longer concerned with immortality would maintain that belief in immortality is burdensome since it keeps man from living to the fullest in the only life he has to

live. Now, many Christians will immediately understand this life-assertion as an expression of hedonism, but such an interpretation is not justified. There are, of course, hedonists who do not believe in immortality, but, more important, there are men and women who live lives of great denial and sacrifice, who give themselves unstintingly to their fellow men—those born and those unborn—and who have no belief in nor hope for immortality. All the abstract or speculative arguments for or against immortality pale alongside of one life so lived. At the same time, the issue in existential terms remains unresolved since there can be no doubt that other men and women through their belief in and hope for immortality have been led to give themselves just as fully to their fellow men.

Thus some can argue that men will not live their lives in such a way as to contribute to the building of the human community so long as they are distracted by a belief in immortality; but others can argue that men will not long continue struggling to build a world in which they will have no share. In terms of pragmatism, of course, both of these are hypotheses and only the quality of life manifested by those living in accordance with these beliefs can stand as evidence for or against them. Since, as has been already indicated, there can never be absolutely compelling evidence in a question such as personal immortality, there is no avoiding a fundamental act of faith both on the part of those who believe man mortal and those who believe him immortal. Nevertheless the Christian who still believes in immortality cannot rest content in the awareness that his belief is not able to be disproved. Any pragmatic reconstruction of the symbol of the "resurrection," for example, will have to consider seriously the possibility that this can continue to serve as a spur to man to celebrate life but that it cannot be understood as holding out to man the promise of a new life "after death." The heart of the matter centers around the phrase "after death," for "celebration of life" and affirming the possibility of a "new life" are values shared by men who are in

radical disagreement over the possibility of any personal life continuing after death. Those who deny this possibility are likely to become more concerned with attempts to reconcile man to death. There are signs of the emergence of what might be called a "romance of death," that is, efforts to show that man can truly celebrate life only if he also celebrates that death which is the natural termination of life. Further, such views stress the cyclical rhythm of life and death and urge man to come to terms with his inevitable return to that "nothingness" from which he has emerged.¹⁷

For some Christians, then, Christ's "victory over death" can only mean that men have been given the possibility of reconciling themselves to death. Other Christians, however, will consider this a hollow victory indeed, since it would mean that death truly does "come as an end." If such be the case, these Christians would concede the necessity to *accept* death but they would contend that they will not try to deceive themselves into *celebrating* or *welcoming* death. Rather they would prefer to acknowledge the "tragic" dimension of human life as permanent and incapable ever of being overcome.

Pragmatic Reconstruction of "Meaning"

In an age characterized by the "death of God" and an encroaching despair and nihilism, the particular features of the various religions, including so-called secular religions, are secondary to the prior question as to whether there is any longer the possibility for some kind of meaning-affirmation concerning human existence. A character in one of the plays of Albert Camus says the following:

To lose one's life is no great matter; when the time comes I'll have the courage to lose mine. But what's intolerable is to see one's life being drained of meaning, to be told there's no reason for existing. A man can't live without some reason for living.¹⁸

Camus concludes "that the meaning of life is the most urgent of questions."¹⁹ Surely the current dissatisfaction and rebellion on the part of young people cannot be understood apart from a deep desire and longing for meaning. During the student upheaval at Berkeley several years ago, one of the students was quoted as saying, "We insist upon, we demand meaning." To recognize the desire and need for meaning, however, is much easier than being able to satisfy it.

We have heard much in the last few years about how the young fear that they have no future, and this is surely a crucial aspect of their situation. Such an assertion can be misleading, however, for it tends to mask the fact that it is man himself who fears that he has no future. This fear, of course, has to some extent been present in some form from the earliest moment of man's consciousness. Still, it has become more and more intense over the last century until it has reached a crescendo in our time. All the meaning-giving institutions such as the family, the Church, the school, the nation and the like are in states of radical upheaval and less and less are able to support human existence as they did in the past. One response to the increasing inefficacy of these institutions is to insist more fervently on their necessity and urge men to return to the old "tried and true" ways. For other men, however, such a return is no longer a live option; yet they feel in a state of emptiness since they have not been able to create new forms of meaning-giving relationships. Ironically, this "emptiness" often gives rise to a nostalgia for a simpler, purer form of life which expresses itself in some form of romantic utopianism.

Again and again, I have attempted to indicate that the basic thrust of pragmatism has been to avoid that polarization which seems almost an inevitable aspect of human development. Certainly it has been so in the past but we must now ask ourselves whether we can continue indefinitely to swing from one extreme and unbalanced position to another. This is not to suggest a need for some tepid neutralism whereby

the sharply contrasting hues of human life are transformed into a dull gray. Instead, what is needed is a continual awareness of both the possibilities and the limitations of the human situation in such a way that the diverse and often conflicting viewpoints which emerge will be stimuli to full community development rather than fortress-like resting places which divide the community into warring camps. It is just such a "balance" that Dewey endeavored to achieve in the whole of his works and it is masterfully expressed in the following passage:

Men move between extremes. They conceive of themselves as gods, or feign a powerful and cunning god as an ally who bends the world to do their bidding and meet their wishes. Disillusioned, they disown the world that disappoints them; and hugging ideals to themselves as their own possession, stand in haughty aloofness apart from the hard course of events that pays so little heed to our hopes and aspirations. But a mind that has opened itself to experience and that has ripened through its discipline knows its own littleness and impotencies; it knows that its wishes and acknowledgements are not final measures of the universe whether in knowledge or in conduct, and hence are, in the end, transient. But it also knows that its juvenile assumption of power and achievement is not a dream to be wholly forgotten. It implies a unity with the universe that is to be preserved. The belief, and the effort of thought and struggle which it inspires are also the doing of the universe, and they in some way, however slight, carry the universe forward. A chastened sense of our importance, apprehension that it is not a yard-stick by which to measure the whole, is consistent with the belief that we and our endeavors are significant not only for themselves but in the whole.²⁰

The question confronting contemporary man, then, is whether he can acknowledge his own responsibility for human meaning without either falling into despair or taking on an exag-

gerated and destructive pride. This is not a question to be answered in the abstract—only the personal lives of all men will determine the kind of response which man makes to it. One should not unduly romanticize the processive nature of the human situation which places such responsibility in the hands of man. In the first burst of enthusiasm which accompanies the overthrow of some restraining institution we fail to reckon with the loss that is also a part of this change. This is often a most painful experience for young persons who are bewildered by the “freedom” which they claim belongs to them as mature human beings. Their bewilderment at times leads them into the seemingly contradictory position of denouncing an older generation for the failure to give them values—to supply their lives with meaning—while rejecting all attempts at doing just that. This leads some persons to denounce the ways of the young for lack of gratitude while others beat their breasts and lament their failure in having no values worth giving to the young. Perhaps the time has come for all men, young or old, to lay aside once and for all any thought of simply “giving” or “receiving” values whether from the school, the family, the Church or the nation. The young must recognize that insofar as they are mature they share in the responsibility which all men have of bringing forth meaningful human values and that they cannot share in the joy of such creation unless they also share in its pain. Those of an older generation must not despair because some of the values which gave meaning to their lives seem unacceptable to the young. They must recognize that meaning-affirmation is a continuing task and they can no longer look to any specific source for any final and absolutely certain meaning.

To illustrate this, let me consider “faith in God” as a mode of meaning-affirmation. In order to indicate how this is to be understood, it will be necessary to describe briefly the various interpretations which might be attached to the general assertion that “man’s life is meaningful.” This might be understood as

maintaining either that meaning is rooted in the essential structures of reality or that reality allows for the creation of meaning on the part of man. Each of these can then be subdivided—some of those who hold that meaning is rooted in the essential structures of reality interpret this to say that there is meaning because there are values in the structure of reality whether or not God exists—thus certain Renaissance and Enlightenment philosophers. Others account for these values in terms of God as the giver of meaning—thus most religions.

Similarly, the view that man is the creator of meaning or values is understood in two different ways. For some it means that man, acting alone, grafts meaning onto reality—thus the various forms of atheistic and secular humanisms. I believe, however, that man the creator of meaning can also be understood as affirming that man, in response to a “call” from and in cooperation with the *Other*, whom we traditionally call God, grafts meaning onto reality. Thus, as I would interpret this, man recognizes and accepts responsibility for the creation of himself and the world, without falling prey to any self-deification. The “call,” symbolically understood, is the awareness which man has of the need continually to move beyond himself in order to realize himself and the world. But the manner and form of this movement must be *created* by man and it is not merely the imitation of some eternally ordained pattern rooted in the mind of God. Man is, nevertheless, spurred on and energized by the belief that he is responding to and cooperating with an *Other*. Man thereby believes that what he is doing is participating in a process that is more inclusive than himself. Further, he can trust this *Other* to support those human efforts and achievements which are worthy of support. He cannot, however, expect this *Other* to play the role of a *deus ex machina* and thereby protect man from hurt or get him out of “jams” or even give absolute assurance that the entire human effort will not fail.

The question has been raised, “After Auschwitz, can one

continue to believe in God?" There is, of course, a companion question: "After Auschwitz, can one continue to believe in Man?" My response to both questions is really a response to a single question, namely: Is human life meaningful? I have affirmed that it is, but only on the condition that both man and God are cooperatively involved in an unfinished work. While a God of power is no longer a fruitful symbol of man's faith, a God of love is—particularly when the processive incarnation of that love depends upon man's faith, hope and love.

NOTES

1. Cf. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "Building the Earth" (*Cross Currents*, Fall, 1959, p. 325). "Religion has sometimes been understood as a mere antidote to our evils, an 'opiate.' Its true purpose is to sustain and spur on the progress of life."

2. Cf. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 437. "But this conception of philosophy also waits to be tried, and the trial which shall approve or condemn lies in the eventual issue."

3. Cf. Carl Michalson, *The Rationality of Faith* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 135. Michalson sees in the maturity of faith "not the end of dependence upon God, but the beginning of an existence in which *everything* is received from God, hence under responsibility to him. Therefore, not the end of God in the world but the end of God as the explanation of the world and the beginning of God as the source of the world's meaning."

4. It has been frequently noted that there is a vicious circle involved in any attempt to "ground" faith upon some authority, whether that authority be the Scriptures, the Church or science, inasmuch as any such authority can be affirmed as an authority only by what is itself an act of faith.

5. Cf. John J. McDermott, *The American Angle of Vision* (New York: *Cross Currents*, 1966), p. 86. McDermott maintains that concern for the future which avoids betraying the present is characteristic of American experience: "Over against the doctrine of obsolescence in which the history of man waits patiently for a paradisaical *Deus ex machina*, the American temper points to a temporalized eschatology in which the Spirit manifests itself generation by generation and all counts to the end."

6. Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 32.

7. James, *The Will to Believe*, pp. xi-xii.

8. James, *Writings*, p. 336.

9. A pragmatic reconstruction of Christian faith inevitably leaves itself open to the charge of subverting both pragmatism and Christian faith. It cannot be denied that if pragmatism and Christianity are closed and solidified traditions, then any interaction between them will be destructive of one or both. If, however, the traditions are characterized by fluidity, openness and incompleteness, any interaction will involve transformation; but whether such transformation will be an enrichment or a diminution of either or both would remain to be determined. The point I am making is that, a priori, one can neither rule out nor be assured of the fruitful consequences of a pragmatic reconstruction of Christian faith.

10. James, *Writings*, p. 470.

11. John Dewey, *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics* (New York: Hillary House, 1957), p. 190.

12. Cf. Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 101. "We have depended upon the clash of war, the stress of revolution, the emergence of heroic individuals, the impact of migrations generated by war and famine, the incoming of barbarians, to change established institutions. Instead of constantly utilizing unused impulse to effect continuous reconstruction, we have waited till an accumulation of stresses suddenly breaks through the dikes of custom."

13. The terms "call" and "promise" are in quotes to indicate that they are to be understood symbolically and not literally. For more on this point, see p. 241.

14. Cf. Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, pp. 374-375. "It is impossible to imagine a situation in which there are no values worked out in the past which need to be conserved. But their conservation may demand a change in the means by which they are maintained, a change in laws and habits. It is evident that not all customs and ways of doing things can be changed simultaneously. . . . The problem is always one of discrimination and emphasis: What social arrangements at any given time and place should be kept relatively stable and what arrangements should be modified, in order that values may be rendered more secure, more equitably distributed, richer and more diversified?"

15. Cf. Eugene C. Bianchi, "Secular Ecumenism" (*Thought*, Spring, 1969), p. 83. "For 'secular ecumenism' represents the increasing movement in the churches to strive together to build a more just and humane family of man. It means going beyond common worship and interchurch dialogue, two important elements of the church unity movement, to work together for a much wider unity of man in contemporary society."

16. Teilhard de Chardin has probably exaggerated the awareness of process on the part of the early Church but there can be no question of a significant foreshadowing of the contemporary consciousness of world and human development.

17. This is the pervasive theme of Richard L. Rubenstein's *After Auschwitz* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966).

18. Albert Camus, *Caligula and Three Other Plays*, trans. by Stuart Gilbert (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), p. 21.

19. Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. from the French by Justin O'Brien (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 4.

20. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, pp. 419-420.